

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Capitalist investors
look to Vietnam

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 59/NO. 1 JANUARY 9, 1995

Socialist youth meet volunteer workers in Cuba

BY LAURA GARZA

CAIBARIÉN, Cuba — "How far is there to go?" "When will they meet?" All over Cuba, but especially in this town in Villa Clara province, people were following the progress of the 400 road construction workers from the "Campaign of Las Villas" Contingent.

These volunteer workers were in the last hours of a five-year-long project to complete the first phase of building a 30-mile road from the mainland out to Santa María Key, one of a number of coastal keys that the Cuban government plans to develop for tourism. Two teams of workers, starting from either end, built stretches of the road and planned to meet halfway, in the middle of the water.

Just 24 hours before the two teams met, two visiting young workers from the United States, Brian Taylor and Naomi Craine, who are members of the Young Socialists, were taken to the end of the road from the mainland. The young socialists

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Join effort to distribute and study Marxist magazine

It may not be surprising that capitalist politicians like Bill Clinton do not encourage workers and young people to read books and think for themselves. After all, these defenders of the status quo have no interest in anyone thinking critically. But it is striking that emerging rightist figures who offer a radical criticism of mainstream capitalist politics — Patrick Buchanan,

EDITORIAL

Ross Perot, Rush Limbaugh, and others — rarely urge anyone to read and study either. They don't need or want to. Their antiworker, anti-immigrant, and anti-woman demagoguery appeals to accumulated resentments and coarseness, not to the ability of working people to take control of their destiny and change society in the interests of the majority.

New International no. 10 is an effective answer to these defenders of capitalism and reaction. It gives a scientific, factual explanation for why the international capitalist economic system is in a long-term crisis that cannot be resolved short of giant class confrontations. The practical perspective the magazine presents in face of the devastating future offered by capitalism — a communist perspective — will live or die on the shoulders of reading, thinking, and self-confident working people and youth. It is these forces who

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ANC charts next steps in democratic revolution

3,000 discuss 'transformation' of South Africa

BY STEVE CLARK
AND GREG McCARTAN

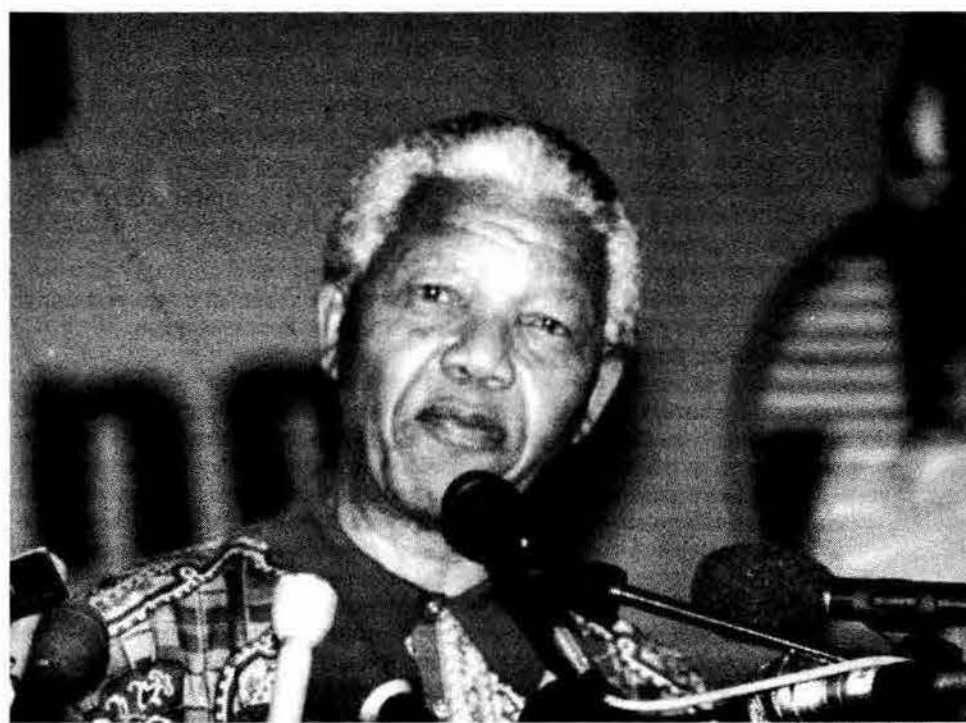
BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa — "Inasmuch as we succeeded in mobilizing the people for the victory" in this country's first democratic elections in April 1994, said Nelson Mandela, "we have today the responsibility to mobilize them to become active participants in improving their quality of life, in defending our newly won democracy. We have to inculcate into our people the culture of taking responsibility for the task of reconstruction and development. Neither government nor the ANC alone can realize these plans."

With these words African National Congress president Mandela concluded the opening address to the organization's 49th national conference, presented on behalf of the ANC's National Executive Committee, its highest elected leadership body. Some 3,000 delegates from across the country took part in the five-day policy-making meeting, held under the banner "From Resistance to Reconstruction and Nation-Building."

The conference was held here at the University of the Orange Free State, which admitted its first Black student this year. The ANC was founded in this city 83 years ago in 1912.

Delegates were chosen by ANC branches in cities, urban townships, and rural villages across the country. The big majority were workers, members from impoverished rural areas, and students and other youth. Others were ANC cadres, young and old, from the organization's staff, national and regional government's, unions and other mass organizations, and the professions and business. Diplomats resident in South Africa were invited to all open sessions.

Fraternal nonvoting delegates included representatives from the ANC's caucus in



Militant/Greg McCartan

ANC president Nelson Mandela said delegates "showed unprecedented unity and concern with implementing government programs to better the lives of the people."

the national and regional parliaments, the ANC Women's League, and the ANC Youth League. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party, and the South African National Civic Organisation had observer delegations. SANCO addresses issues like housing, electrification, sanitation, and other community problems.

Proceedings were conducted in English, with simultaneous translation into Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and Tsonga.

"Nkosi Sikelel' i-Afrika," the traditional anthem of the ANC, and "Die Stem," the Afrikaans-language song that has been the

official anthem of South Africa for decades, were both sung at the opening and closing.

Reports by Mandela and Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa reviewed how the ANC carried out decisions of the last conference, held in 1991, just over a year after it had been unbanned by the apartheid regime. In the subsequent three years the ANC led the revolutionary democratic movement through negotiations with the government; organized protest demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts to force the regime to hold one-person, one-vote elec-

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Philadelphia

Holiday Inn Independence Mall
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Philadelphia

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Hear:

JACK BARNES in Los Angeles
national secretary of the
Socialist Workers Party

MICHEL PRAIRIE in Philadelphia
editor, *Nouvelle Internationale*

GEORGE FYSON in Minneapolis
editor, *The Militant*

Cuban Workers and Farmers Defend Their Socialist Revolution: A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

Talks by participants in the November 1994 World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba held in Havana and the December Young Socialists speaking tour in Cuba

Hear:

MARY-ALICE WATERS in Philadelphia
editor, *New International*

ARGIRIS MALAPANIS in Minneapolis
managing editor, *The Militant*

NAOMI CRAINE in Los Angeles
Young Socialists leader

Eyewitness Report-Back from South Africa

Talks by observers at the December 1994 National Conference of the African National Congress

Hear:

STEVE CLARK
in Philadelphia & Minneapolis
editor, *Nelson Mandela Speaks*

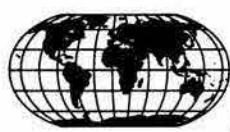
GREG McCARTAN in Los Angeles
editor, *Nelson Mandela:
Speeches 1990*

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see directory on page 12.

Castro: 'We must wage a battle against capitalism' — pages 8-12



Moscow bombs Chechnya as crowd halts tanks

Russian planes dropped bombs on the Shali airport in Chechnya December 18 as troops moved toward the capital city of Grozny. Russian warplanes have fired rockets at both military targets and residential neighborhoods in the city of 400,000. Russian troops also fired on a convoy of Chechen refugees fleeing the country. Nine people were killed.

Earlier, facing a crowd of protesting civilians, Russian general Ivan Babichev halted the advance of his tank division about 20 miles from Grozny and said he would go no further.

Meanwhile, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, who ordered the 40,000 troops into Chechnya, received a boost from U.S. vice president Al Gore, who, on a visit to Moscow, called the intervention an "internal Russian affair."

Mass migration in China

China is undergoing an unprecedented migration from the countryside to the cities. According to a recent Baltimore Sun report, 10 million peasants were expected to migrate in 1994, adding to the 80 million already living in shantytowns in China's big cities and along the coast. Only 15 years ago, 92 percent of the country's population were peasants. Today, 72 percent live in rural areas and only 40 percent actually farm.

Millions of these newly proletarianized working people cannot find work. The Chinese government recently said its unemployment rate stands at 17 percent in major cities.

SWAPO wins Namibia elections

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) won Namibia's first post-independence elections with some 71 percent of the vote. Sam Nujoma was re-elected president of Namibia with 72 percent of the vote against Mishake Muyongo of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). The DTA had links with the former apartheid regime of South Africa.

Nujoma led SWAPO in a 23-year guerrilla war for independence against South African colonial rule. Apartheid's domination was broken following a major defeat inflicted on the South African army in An-



Protesters in Chechnya surround Russian general Ivan Babichev, who subsequently halted his troops outside the capital city of Grozny. The Russian army has been bombing the city in an effort to halt the republic's demand for independence.

gola in 1988 by Angolan troops and Cuban and SWAPO volunteer fighters.

Bribe charge shakes Rome

An investigation of corruption charges against Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, has shaken the right-wing coalition government there. Berlusconi was questioned in Milan for seven hours December 13 about alleged payments of \$200,000 made to Italian tax officers in return for favorable tax audits.

The political crisis wracking Rome deepened as 21 inspectors in the justice ministry resigned the same day in the face of mounting public criticism. They had been sent to "investigate" the Milan judge who interrogated Berlusconi.

One of Berlusconi's rivals in the coalition government, Umberto Bossi of the Northern League, publicly predicted a government rupture, stating, "It will be the end of Berlusconi."

Collor acquitted in Brazil

Former president Fernando Collor was

acquitted December 12 of corruption charges by a 5-3 Supreme Court ruling. Collor had faced a maximum of eight years in prison.

The trial ended without a conviction after the court decided that computer diskettes submitted by the prosecution as evidence of a network of corruption had been illegally obtained. The former president was forced to resign in 1992 following massive protests supporting impeachment proceedings against him.

Dissatisfaction with the ruling among working people and others in Brazil, as well as the weak prosecution effort, have raised the possibility of a new trial over charges of embezzlement. Collor has been accused of embezzling \$100 million in his more than two years in office.

Argentine military in Chiapas

Ramiro de la Rosa, vice president of the Latin American Parliament, stated in a prominent Buenos Aires daily, *Página 12*, that at least 20 Argentine military advisors were operating in Mexico. The report alleged that the advisors were paid \$10,000 a month to aid in eliminating the Zapatista National Liberation Army, a guerrilla group operating in the state of Chiapas.

Argentina's minister of defense, Oscar Camilión, denied the allegation, telling reporters in Buenos Aires, "There are no Argentine military officers, whether retired or active-duty, advising the Mexicans."

In the 1970s the Argentine military waged a "dirty war" against unions and political opponents in which tens of thousands were tortured or killed. They later sold their services to the U.S.-backed mercenaries in Nicaragua until the 1982 war with Britain disrupted those plans.

Plane crashes after FAA ban

The second American Eagle flight in two months crashed in North Carolina December 13, killing 15 people. The plane, a Jetstream Super 31, has a history of crashes while flying in icy conditions.

In early December, the Federal Aviation Administration banned two types of planes from flying, the ATR-72 and the ATR-42. The American Eagle plane that crashed October 31 was an ATR-72. This was the fifth fatal crash of a U.S. airliner this year, bringing the number of deaths to 257.

Orange County sells off fund

The government of Orange County, California, which filed for bankruptcy December 6, has begun to sell off its depleted \$20 billion investment holdings in order to cap more than \$2 billion in losses. The Orange County collapse was the largest single loss in the U.S. bond markets this year and the largest bankruptcy ever involving a unit of government in the United States.

The sale of the remaining securities, valued at \$8 billion, follows a fire sale of \$12 billion of bonds and other investments by U.S. and international investment banks. These securities were held as collateral against loans made to the county. About \$5 billion in securities from Orange County's investment fund belongs to 187 different municipal authorities, school districts, transportation authorities, and others who invested their money with the county authorities.

Washington signs pact with Haiti

Officials from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Haitian finance ministry signed an agreement December 14 to create a joint Business Development Council that will give tax breaks and other incentives to U.S. companies that establish operations in Haiti before July 1, 1995. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide also pledged to introduce legislation to lower import tariffs.

In a move to guarantee profits for U.S. banks and corporations, Washington pledged almost \$25 million to the Haitian government to clear back debts on loans. The plan includes \$12 million from the United States Agency for International Development for the assembly and handicrafts industries, which U.S. companies hope to operate profitably.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

Damon Tinnon contributed to this column.

THE MILITANT

Eyewitness team in S. Africa

The 49th national conference of the African National Congress took place December 17-21 in Bloemfontein, South Africa. A 'Militant' reporting team was there to provide eyewitness coverage of the ANC's first national policy-making conference since the 1994 elections. The team will also provide reports on other developments in the class struggle there. Don't miss a single issue!



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Capitalist investors look to Vietnam

BY PAT SMITH

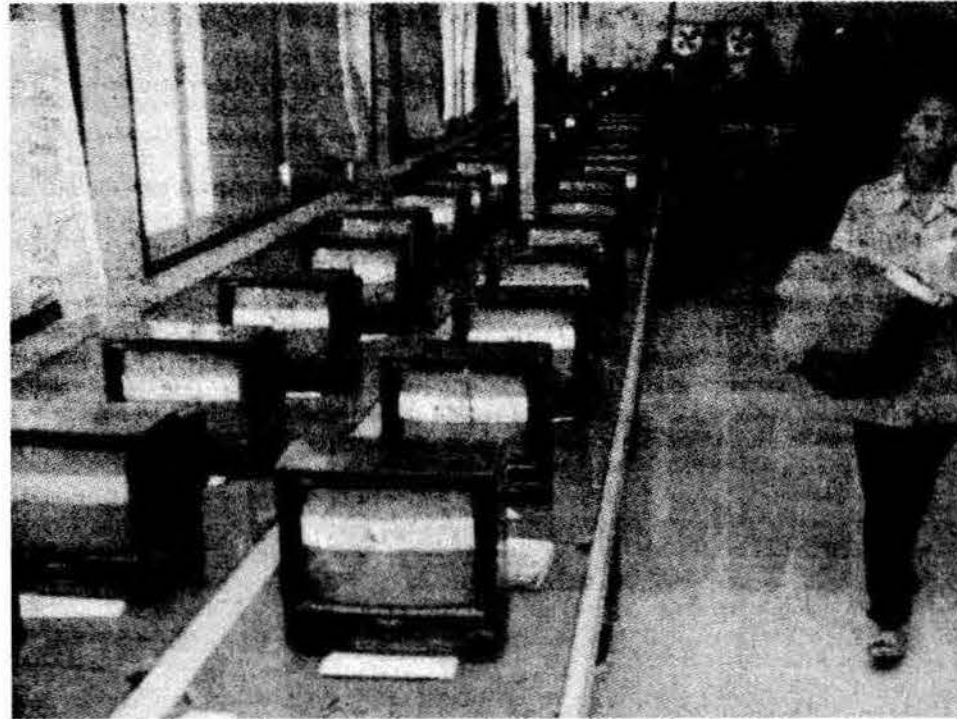
With an eye to cheap labor and a growing potential market, international investors are looking to Vietnam. The World Bank pledged \$2 billion in loans and grants to that Southeast Asian country at a November meeting in Paris.

"The promises were backed by unusually strong praise for the country's efforts to liberalise its economy and what the bank called its recent 'impressive performance,'" the December 1 *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported. The magazine noted that growth of Vietnam's gross domestic product growth this year was expected to be 8.5 percent, up from 8.1 percent last year. Inflation is at 5.2 percent, down from 17 percent.

Ho Chi Minh City, in southern Vietnam, is home to a \$733 million Singaporean project to build houses, an education center, and a hospital. Thirty construction projects are under way in Hanoi. With only 200,000 cars and service vehicles on the road, Chrysler, Mitsubishi, Renault, BMW, and Mercedes Benz plan to set up shop and sell to the urban centers' growing middle class. Tourism has been the main foreign investment in central Vietnam, while industrial investors have targeted Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The highest investments come from capitalists in Taiwan and Hong Kong, followed by those in South Korea, Australia, Singapore, Japan, and France. U.S. firms, which began investing after Washington lifted its 19-year embargo against Vietnam in February, rank 14th.

The U.S. government-imposed sanctions on North Vietnam in 1964 and extended them to the entire country in 1975 after failing to crush the liberation struggle. The triumph over Washington culminated a decades-long fight by the workers and peasants of Vietnam against colonial and neocolonial domination and for socialism. The new government in Vietnam took a number of measures to attack basic social problems like hunger, unemployment, drug addiction, and other ills brought by years of capitalist exploitation. The government established free health care, and education and agricultural cooperatives.



Television factory in Hanoi. Foreign capitalists are investing in Vietnam to take advantage of the high profits from a low-wage labor force and tap a growing market.

The country's Stalinist leadership prevented the workers state's advancement, however. Hanoi officially sanctioned capitalist market reforms, called *doi moi* or renovation, in 1986. The system of collectivized agriculture, plagued by bureaucratic methods, had virtually collapsed a year earlier following crop failures and food shortages.

Vietnamese officials stress they plan to open the economy to international investment even more in 1995, promote privately owned industry, and attract more of the country's large rural population into the urban labor force.

Hanoi has slashed the number of its state-owned enterprises from 12,000 in 1990 to 7,000 in 1993. It plans to hold on to those that are "strategic." Capitalist investors say the Vietnamese government can continue to run public service agencies, including power and water plants, but should turn all manufacturing over to private firms.

Throughout the countryside peasants are being driven off the land and into urban areas, where they are expanding the reserve army of low-wage labor. The government has sought to hold down wages to encourage foreign capitalist investment.

The per capita income is reported at \$500 a year in industrial centers like Ho Chi Minh City. In the countryside, where about 80 percent of Vietnam's 73 million people live, it is closer to \$220.

In Quang Tri province, when the harvest is good, many of the 400,000 farm families there earn less than \$200 a year. When crops are lost to flood or drought they are left with nothing. The government no longer guarantees farmers seed and fertilizer for such emergencies.

Since 1989 Vietnam has been the world's third-largest exporter of rice after the United States and Thailand, with an average of 2 million tons a year. The country's overworked farmland has three times the population density of China.

"I have seen pictures of Hanoi and the other big cities, and I think they must be like paradise, like a dream," Ho Thi Dong, a 40-year-old farm worker in Cam Lo, Vietnam, told a *New York Times* reporter. "But here in the countryside, I think life is more difficult than before. The government cannot help us as before." Dong supports two children on her \$12-a-month earnings. She explained she was ill. "I have trouble keeping food down," she said. "In the old system I could go to the doctor and get the stomach medicine for free. Now, I must pay for the medicine myself."

Cuts in social services

"During what we call the transition period from a planned subsidized economy to a market-oriented economy, of course there are negative impacts, and one of these is on health," said Pham Huy Dung of Vietnam's health ministry. Hanoi cut funding to the hospital in Quang Tri Province by one-third, for example.

The country's health-care system, once fully financed by the government, is being privatized. Five years ago there were only a few state-run pharmacies in Hanoi. Today more than 1,000 are privately owned.

A recent health ministry study found that 95 percent of the customers at two pharmacies surveyed went straight to the druggist without visiting a doctor because doctor visits were too costly. In one store, only one out of 289 customers had a doctor's prescription. The study revealed that pharmacists most often prescribed those medications that brought in the highest profits.

The government began to reduce social services four years ago, instead funneling the money into the construction of roads and electrical lines to attract capitalist investment. This is in a country where half the children under age six are malnourished, and malaria is on the rise.

In public schools across Vietnam, students are now required to pay for their books and sometimes even for classes. Parents who cannot afford the expense must pull their children out of school.

"It's logical for people to pay something for medicine and education in a market economy," said government economist Do Duc Dinh. "In the cities this has been no problem. The problem is with the 10 percent of the population that still cannot afford these services."

Strikes break out

Workers in Vietnam have conducted dozens of strikes over the past year, reflecting the class conflicts and social inequalities that have been heightened by Hanoi's market reforms. Hundreds of workers opened 1994 by striking four factories in Ho Chi Minh City over wages and working conditions. Two hundred fifty workers at a privately-owned toy manufacturer won concessions after a short walkout to protest late paychecks.

Workers at a state-owned cashew processing plant also scored a victory after a brief work stoppage. In December, 300 textile workers in Viet Tri City struck and won wage hikes. The strike "reflects growing assertiveness among Vietnamese workers," London's *Financial Times* said.

Buchanan readies presidential campaign

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Ultrarightist politician Pat Buchanan has taken the first steps toward launching his campaign for the U.S. presidency in 1996. The news was reported December 16 by radio host Larry King, who said Buchanan had "formed an exploratory committee" to consider his candidacy.

Although Buchanan has not yet made an official statement, an aide from his group, American Cause, told the *Militant* the 1996 presidential campaign was being discussed.

Buchanan ran for president in 1992 as a Republican, campaigning under the banner of "America First." He has kept one foot in mainstream capitalist politics while at the same time appealing to disgruntled middle-class elements and others who are willing to act outside that framework and to fight in the streets to impose reactionary solutions. Buchanan represents a variety of incipient American fascism.

Since the 1992 elections, the rightist

politician has continued to push his nationalist demagoguery. Backing California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187, he demanded the federal government "defend California's border and expel the invaders." He played a prominent role in the opposition to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), stating, "America surrenders her national sovereignty, her freedom of action to defend her own economic vital interests from the job pillagers of Tokyo and Beijing."

Buchanan announced his campaign move the day after President Bill Clinton made a speech — widely viewed as sounding out his own reelection campaign — promising a "middle-class tax cut."

On the December 16 "Larry King Live" program, entitled "The Possibility of a

Third Party," former senator Tsongas blasted Clinton's speech. "Look at last night. All the give-aways, no entitlement reform. Same thing is true with the Republicans," complained Tsongas, founder of the Concord Coalition. He applauded a bipartisan committee headed by senators Bob Kerrey and John Danforth that proposed drastic cuts in Social Security.

Tsongas has called for a third capitalist party to run in the 1996 elections. He suggested the presidential candidate be Gen. Colin Powell, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the U.S.-led war on Iraq.

Also appearing on "Larry King Live" was Ed Rollins, who for a while was one of rightist politician Ross Perot's campaign organizers in 1992.

U.S. helicopter shot down over N. Korea

BY PAT SMITH

North Korean troops downed a U.S. helicopter December 17, three to five miles inside North Korean territory. The Kiowa reconnaissance helicopter was 10 miles off its stated course. The government in Pyongyang charges that Chief Warrant Officers David Hilemon and Bobby Hall were on one of Washington's many hostile surveillance operations.

The U.S. government has 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea. The joint military exercises it routinely carries out with the Seoul regime amount to practice invasions of the North. Washington's heavy military presence enforces the division of the Korean peninsula against massive popular sentiment in North and South for reunification of the country.

Clinton administration officials claimed they were puzzled about how two experienced pilots ended up over Kumgang County on North Korea's east coast, but in-

sisted they accidentally strayed off course during a routine training mission. Hilemon, who was killed in the incident, had more than 1,000 hours of flying time in the Kiowa and had flown a chopper in the Persian Gulf War. Hall had registered 1,021 hours total flying time, at least 20 hours of that in Korea. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon admitted weather was not a factor, with visibility at six miles.

U.S. officials, however, condemned and threatened Pyongyang for shooting down the helicopter. The White House threatened to back out of a deal brokered in October between the U.S. and North Korean governments. Under the agreement, Washington is to arrange to get nuclear reactors and fuel oil to North Korea in exchange for changes in Pyongyang's nuclear program.

"Failure to aggressively investigate this case and failure to return the missing servicemen would have a serious impact on U.S.-North Korean relations," a spokes-

man for Democratic representative Bill Richardson warned North Korean officials. The Clinton administration asked Richardson to extend his stay in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to help resolve the situation. The congressman was there on unrelated business.

"They're not exactly in an enviable position in the world, are they?" Democratic senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan said threateningly on the December 18 CBS news program "Face the Nation."

"Their dictator's dead. Their economy's dead. And they've got two American pilots, and they'd better get them back fast," he added.

Pyongyang turned down a request to meet with U.S. officials in Panmunjom December 19, saying they were still investigating the incident. A couple of days later, however, Hilemon's remains were returned. North Korean government officials indicated they would later release Hall.



Militant/Jon Hillson
Rightist politician Patrick Buchanan

'New International' magazine explains imperialism's march to fascism and war

Printed below are major excerpts of the introduction to the just published issue of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. Issue no. 10 features the articles "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" by Mary-Alice Waters, "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," and "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes. Copyright ©408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY STEVE CLARK

This issue of *New International* looks at the consequences over the last seven years of the decelerating growth, heightened volatility, and increasing instability that more and more form the pattern of international capitalism — a pattern signaled by the near-meltdown in October 1987 of stock markets from New York and London to Tokyo and Hong Kong. The spreading vulnerability of the market system, sharpening interimperialist conflict, and deepening insecurity in the lives of growing hundreds of millions impose themselves on all of world politics.

Only a few years ago, the authoritative representatives of the world's bourgeois ruling classes were hailing the dawn of a New World Order, built on what they portray as the historic triumph of democratic capitalism over communism. They pledged a future of economic plenty, expanding democratic rights, and growing world peace.

The articles in these pages offer a different point of view. As humanity heads toward the twenty-first century, the future in fact offered by international finance capital is one of deepening economic depression and an accompanying march toward fascism and war.

Communist conclusions

The political conclusions that best fit this reality — and are thus the best guide to action — are communist conclusions. A cataclysmic outcome of victorious fascist movements and a war of previously unknown dimensions and intensity is not foreordained. Before fascism can triumph and another interimperialist war becomes inevitable, workers will be driven to resist the capitalists' mounting assaults on our living and working conditions, on our democratic rights, and on the very conditions that make possible human solidarity. With revolutionary leadership, forged over time in the workers movement, working people can wrest power from the governments of the ruling families in the United States and other capitalist countries, stop the inexorable march toward a third world war, and open the road to a socialist future of cooperative human labor, truly democratic government, and cultural advancement.

Because of the place of the Cuban revolution in this historic class struggle, we are opening the issue with a report by *New International* editor Mary-Alice Waters on the fight for socialism in Cuba today. The

Cuban revolution remains, as it has been for thirty-five years, at the center of the worldwide contest between capitalism and socialism—the contest that has marked world politics since the victory in October 1917 of the Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia.

Today the decisive front in that battle pits U.S. imperialism—the world's most powerful, and final, empire—against a small but unyielding workers and farmers government in Cuba. As Waters explains



Youth in Havana demonstrate their support for the revolution in November 1994. "Broad layers of the working class in Cuba and its communist vanguard maintain an unbroken will and capacity to fight in defense of the revolution's socialist character," a report by *New International* editor Mary-Alice Waters explains.

in this August 1994 report to a convention of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, Wall Street and Washington from the outset of the revolution have pursued a course aimed at crushing Cuba's toilers and dividing them from their communist leadership. The reason for the U.S. rulers' hostility toward the Cuban revolution is not complicated. Cuban working people in 1959-60 did the one thing imperialism fights most ruthlessly to prevent: they emulated what the toilers of Russia had done some four decades earlier. They overturned the bourgeoisie's monopoly of state power, established a workers and farmers republic, expropriated capitalist property in land and the basic means of production, and set out to support — in both word and deed — those the world over who are fighting to free themselves from imperialist oppression or capitalist exploitation.

Since the crumbling of the Stalinist apparatuses throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991, most voices speaking out about the Cuban revolution — not only its open bourgeois enemies but also many of its liberal and somewhat socialist "friends" — approach it like the last surviving organism of a species that has become extinct. They regard it as a stubborn problem to be gotten out of the way now that all the other regimes that once called themselves communist — from Moscow to Hanoi,

from Warsaw to Beijing — are unfurling the banner of capitalism and the market.

"Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" by Mary-Alice Waters presents a different perspective. The record of three and a half decades offers convincing evidence that what is most decisive about Cuba are not the ways in which it is similar to other states in which capitalist property relations have been abolished but the ways in which it is fundamentally unlike them. The July 26 Move-

ment conflict in world politics today. And that, in turn, is why defending Cuba and defending Cuba's socialist revolution will remain a task of class-conscious workers and revolutionary-minded youth there and around the world until one side or the other has been defeated in that historic battle.

At the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba, held in Havana in late November 1994 as this issue was being completed, president Fidel Castro in his closing address pointed to the "billions of human beings who go hungry, who don't have schools, who don't have access to hospitals, who don't have jobs, who don't have a roof over their heads, who can't even count on the most elementary necessities of life." He reviewed the history of bloody military interventions by Washington, London, Paris, and other capitalist powers against sovereign peoples in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Root of problems is capitalism

"And what is the root of all these problems?" he asked. "Can anyone perhaps deny that the root of these problems is neocolonialism, imperialism? Can anyone deny that the root of all these problems is capitalism?" Cuba "will never return to capitalism," Castro told the 3,500 participants in the international gathering. "We'd rather perish than renounce our principles. We'd rather perish than renounce socialism!"

If the future of the world capitalist order were indeed the one its boosters today proclaim, then such a statement would be little more than quixotic bravado in face of insuperable odds. In fact, if such apologetic claims for capitalism have any basis, then communists not only in Cuba but the world over are, at best, a doomed and anomalous minority.

The contents of this issue of *New International* make the opposite case. That is why taking a look at Cuba today provides a good entry point to the other articles, which detail the world conditions in which the prospects for the Cuban revolution rise or fall. Cuba is, and must be understood as, an integral part of the economics and politics of the world of the 1990s.

"What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold" is a resolution discussed and adopted by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in the wake of the biggest crash of the world's stock markets since 1929. Presented in 1988 to an SWP convention and international conference of communist leagues from around the world, and adopted by the delegates, the resolution looks at the evolution of world politics prior to the crumbling of the Stalinist apparatuses in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

"Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" is a document based on several talks by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes given in early 1994. It was discussed by members of the Socialist Workers Party in the months leading up to the party's August 1994 convention and adopted by the delegates to that decision-making meeting.

At the close of both the 1988 and 1994 SWP conventions, delegates charged commissions to prepare the adopted resolutions and reports for publication in light of the convention discussion. The three articles in these pages have been left as edited immediately following those conventions. A number of important subsequent developments have been footnoted, and a number of references have been added by the editors of *New International* to aid the reader.

As the articles explain, the potentially devastating consequences of phenomena such as the worldwide stock market crash of 1987 and the proliferation of highly speculative paper securities such as "derivatives" are not isolated to Wall Street. Today's soaring financial greed and related banking and currency dealings — which have grown to many times the dollar value of world trade over the past decade — are the other side of the deflationary depression conditions world capitalism has sunk into for the first time in half a century.

Capitalists are not plowing the hefty profits they are currently reaping from the

ment, the revolutionary organization forged by a team led by Fidel Castro in the 1950s, bypassed the Popular Socialist Party, the Stalinist party in Cuba, in order to lead a successful workers and farmers revolution to bring down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. As the revolution's anticapitalist course deepened, that leadership constructed the first mass communist party to exist since the Stalinist counterrevolution in the 1920s and 1930s.

Today, the revolutionary government in Cuba continues to be distinguished from all the other regimes that have claimed to be communist by two inseparably intertwined features. First, broad layers of the working class in Cuba and its communist vanguard maintain an unbroken will and capacity to fight in defense of the revolution's socialist character. Second, Cuba's workers and farmers government continues to respond to the pressures of the working class and use its power to lead working people in fighting to advance their class aspirations and internationalist commitments.

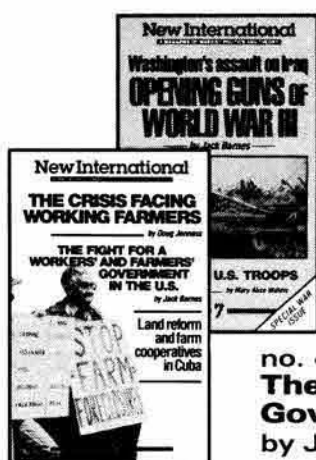
Challenges before Cuba

Waters looks at the current challenges and opportunities before the Cuban revolution today, in face of the defeats of revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada in the 1980s and the most difficult economic conditions in socialist Cuba's history. As at each prior crossroads in the revolution, but more so than ever before, the way forward today combines defending the state power of the working class at home and maintaining their proletarian internationalist perspectives.

As Waters points out, the setbacks in the Americas and sudden cutoff of heavily subsidized trade with the former Soviet Union have necessitated a retreat by the working class and its leadership in Cuba. But revolutionary-minded working people and youth — in the factories and fields, as well as in mass mobilizations and rallies — continue to show their readiness to defend the socialist revolution in face of these difficulties. The government remains their government. And they remain committed to a course that reaches out to workers, farmers, and youth wherever they are engaged in uncompromising anti-imperialist or anticapitalist struggles.

That's why Washington's course toward Havana is unlike the course it charts toward any other government in the world. The relations between these two governments reflect the most irreconcilable class

NEW INTERNATIONAL



no. 7
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exploitation of workers' labor into the expansion of capacity-increasing plant and equipment and a consequent growth of wealth-producing industrial jobs. Instead, cost cutting, "downsizing," computerized speedup, the intensification and atomization of work, and even stock buybacks have become the order of the day for cash-rich finance capital the world over. Despite talk in the business pages about an "investment boom" in the United States since 1991, the biggest expenditures are for computers and telecommunications equipment aimed at squeezing a fatter profit margin out of fewer employees, working in fewer plants, for more hours, with intensified line speed, and for less pay and reduced benefits.

Pointing to this combination of longer workweeks, declining real wages, ongoing layoffs and job insecurity, and conjuncturally rising profits, a front-page article in the November 14 issue of the London-based *Financial Times* proclaimed, "Here is productivity and no mistake. If this is what the peak of the [business] cycle looks like, God help the workers in the next downturn." The article in this leading business daily — hardly known as a champion of workers' rights and living standards — was headlined, "Work harder, or not at all."

The longer-run decline in rates of both industrial profit and capital accumulation described in "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," and the consequent slackening in worldwide economic growth, go back a quarter century to the late 1960s and early 1970s. The unfolding of world capitalism since the 1987 crash, however, has registered the fact that increasing layers of the working class in the United States, Europe, and other imperialist countries face rising unemployment, more part-time and temporary jobs, stagnating or declining real wages, and erosion of hard-won components of the social wage, such as social security pensions, workers' compensation, health care, jobless benefits, and public education.

Economic insecurity mounts

The polarization between wealth and poverty grows worldwide, and economic insecurity mounts. Capitalist horrors that the labor movement and its allies pushed back through decades of struggle — such as homework, the exploitation of child labor, orphanages, and the workhouse — are once again openly advocated by "respectable" bourgeois voices as necessary to restore social discipline and "family values."

In the Third World, the living and working conditions of hundreds of millions remain wretched or are sharply deteriorating. This is true not just for the toilers of sub-Saharan Africa, or of the least economically developed countries of Asia and the Americas. Class differentiation is also impoverishing broad layers of toilers in the handful of Asian and (even fewer) Latin American countries undergoing the most rapid capitalist industrialization and into whose "emerging" stock and bond markets

imperialist capital has been pouring since 1990.

The depression conditions that opened the final decade of the twentieth century will not be reversed by any "automatic corrections" or cyclical action of the capitalist market. Instead, today's deflationary pressures heighten the volatility of capitalism's proliferating paper assets and increase the danger that unanticipated partial crises of whatever origin — political, military, or financial — will precipitate a cascading banking and monetary collapse and breakdown of industrial production and world trade.

Between now and any sustained turnaround in the fortunes of world capitalism, the imperialist rulers will have to confront and win bloody class battles against the workers and their toiling allies. As capitalist disorder increases, growing sections of the employing class, its government, and its political parties will come to recognize the inevitability of these battles. More and more of the exploiters will turn to fascist movements in order to crush the unions and other workers organizations and safeguard bourgeois rule.

The practical implications for class-conscious workers of this difference between a periodic slump in the business cycle, that is, a recession, and a long-term descent in the curve of capitalist development was discussed by the international communist movement in the half decade after the October revolution in Russia. Given the significance of this question to the strategic political issues discussed in this issue, we are reprinting a 1923 article by the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky summarizing conclusions that still hold to this day....

Events of the last few years have offered stunning refutation — if any further were needed in a century scarred by the bloodiest wars and holocausts in history — of the notion that capitalism offers a future of growing world peace. In October 1994 the U.S. government mounted another major military buildup in the Gulf and renewed threats of bombardment of Iraq, whose people are starving as the result of a four-year-long imperialist economic embargo. Washington has once again installed an army of occupation in one of its American neighbors, this time in the Caribbean nation of Haiti.

In a provocation aimed at the socialist revolution in Cuba and its revolutionary government, U.S. officials are holding some 22,000 Cubans in a virtual concentration camp at the Guantánamo naval station on occupied Cuban territory, and Washington has tightened the uncon-



Militant/John Sarge

Flint, Michigan, auto workers strike in September against speedup and overtime. In face of a capitalist future of depression, war, and fascism, *New International* explains the perspective of workers and farmers expropriating the exploiters and joining the worldwide fight for socialism.

scionable economic embargo against Cuba.

The slaughter organized by the Serbian regime and its rival gangs of bureaucrats and aspirant capitalists in the former Yugoslavia is now approaching its fourth year, and British and French troops are on the ground in Bosnia to protect their rival interests in the Balkans. Shouldering "the white man's burden" to defend capitalist order in Africa, armies from the United States, France, Belgium, and other imperialist powers have sent occupation forces into Somalia, Rwanda, and Zaire. Civil wars rage between the ins and the outs among the disintegrating Stalinist apparatuses in various republics of the former USSR, with Moscow dispatching troops to back now one, now another faction to reassert Russia's imperial designs from the Black Sea through Central Asia.

All these wars and interventions, in turn, are resulting in sharpening conflicts among the imperialist powers, and between these powers and Moscow.

Need revolutionary parties

The decaying capitalist world order described in this issue of *New International* provides convincing proof why the revolutionary road the workers and farmers of Cuba set out on thirty-five years ago offers the only way forward for humanity. The task confronting class-conscious workers and revolutionary-minded youth the world over is to establish workers and farmers governments, expropriate the capitalist exploiters whose pursuit of profits is leading us toward another, devastating world war, and begin the worldwide construction of a new socialist order.

Accomplishing these historic tasks is not

possible without building revolutionary workers parties in every country as part of a renewed world communist movement. The crumbling of the Stalinist apparatuses in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has removed the biggest obstacle to advancing that effort. Following the political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s, the Stalinists hijacked the banner of the revolutionary workers movement that Marx and Engels had helped initiate in the mid-nineteenth century. For several years following the October 1917 revolution, the Bolshevik leadership had begun transforming that movement into a truly mass worldwide organization, the Communist International.

The parasitic caste that politically expropriated the working class in the Soviet Union had no function in social production, and thus no historic viability. Stalinism nonetheless got a brief extension of its lease on life by claiming credit for the victory of the Soviet workers and peasants in World War II; the revolutions in Yugoslavia, China, Korea, and Vietnam; and the overturn of capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe.

Today, however, for the first time in nearly seven decades, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that the big majority of revolutionary-minded workers, farmers, and youth attracted to a socialist perspective will be won instead to counterrevolutionary organizations falsely presenting themselves as communist.

It is above all to the workers and youth who are and will become the cadres of a renewed world communist movement that the perspectives in this issue provide an invaluable guide to political action in the months and years ahead.

Youth prepare for brigade to Cuba

BY DAMON TINNON

Young people who are going to Cuba as part of an international brigade are now enthusiastically beginning to dig into books and discussions to be better prepared for their January 6-20 trip. They are also rais-

ing funds and arranging passports, visas, and other requirements. And they continue to sign up more people for the youth brigade.

A group of brigade participants and supporters from Philadelphia, New York, and Cleveland, who had gathered in New York to attend a December 17 public political forum, met the following morning to discuss a pamphlet entitled *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today*. This provided an opportunity to discuss Cuba's socialist revolution.

Some of the brigade participants report they have found it useful to take on a three-pamphlet reading list to prepare for the trip. They are *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today*, *The Second Declaration of Havana*, and a collection of three *Militant* articles.

In Minneapolis, bri-

gade participants are organizing final fundraising efforts and studying ideas they think will be helpful in understanding the Cuban revolution. Megan Arney, a student at the University of Minnesota, has already raised the needed funds for her trip and is now studying "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism," featured in issue no. 8 of *New International* magazine.

"When I go to Cuba, I want to understand as much as possible about it so I can have a better base for the discussions that I will have there," Arney explained. The group will have a send-off party at a restaurant where Arney works.

In San Francisco, brigade participants recently held a rummage sale. A rail worker, Floyd Taylor, brought a used car to the sale. He netted \$650 toward his travel cost.

In other cities, union members and other workers who are not going on the brigade have organized to make donations to enable youth to pay their travel costs.

In Reykjavik, Iceland, Olafur Kristjansson and Eyjolfur Eyuinarson are also working to go on the brigade. They are raising travel funds and telling others about their trip so they can explain the truth about Cuba on their return.

To join and build the brigade, call (212) 677-4356 or write: Cuba Youth Brigade, P.O. Box 1801, New York, NY 10009.

New International no. 10

Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution
by Mary-Alice Waters

What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold
resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party 1988 convention

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War
by Jack Barnes

The Curve of Capitalist Development
a 1923 article by Leon Trotsky

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ANC conference charts next steps in democratic revolution in South Africa

Continued from front page

tions; and mobilized the population for elections in which the ANC won 63 percent of seats in the new combined constitutional assembly and national parliament.

The cabinet, called the Government of National Unity, is comprised of members from all parties that received at least 5 percent of the vote. Mandela is president; Thabo Mbeki first deputy president; and F. W. de Klerk, the former president of South Africa and leader of the National Party, second deputy president. Provincial governments are constituted on the same "national unity" basis.

With an ANC majority in government "we have attained crucial elements of political power," Mandela said. Bringing an end to the upward spiral of political violence prior to the elections has been essential "for reconstruction and development."

"It might be a moot point to debate whether these conclusions and decisions [guiding ANC policy since 1991] were based on a correct assessment... or whether we are today reaping the whirlwind of a terrible misjudgment," Mandela told delegates. "Yes, we did make compromises. But there can be no gainsaying that the approach to use the negotiations process to capture beachheads within the power equation, and then proceed to strengthen our forces from a new vantage point, helped speed the process to the great achievements we celebrate today."

"The challenge we face," he said, is "whether we are utilizing the new positions we occupy effectively to bring about fundamental transformation."

Mandela pointed to several lessons from the last few years to guide the work of the ANC today.

Upcoming local elections

The first lesson, Mandela said, is how "the people themselves grasped the historic opportunity with both hands and braved threats from all kinds of quarters. For it is on those momentous days that the saying rang truer than ever before: 'The people shall be their own liberators.'"

Second, is the extent to which "particularly poorer sections of the Coloured and Indian communities found solace in the racist mobilizations of the National Party and voted in a manner that demonstrated fear of the counterparts among Africans," the ANC president said.

"In class terms, it is a tragedy that working people from these communities should respond with fear to the prospect of their brothers and sisters attaining equality." Coloureds and Indians are minorities within the larger oppressed Black majority in South Africa. The former white supremacist regime had long sought to sow discord between these communities and the African majority.

A third lesson, he said, must be drawn from the electoral majority won in KwaZulu/Natal province by the Inkatha Freedom Party, a reactionary political organization based on the apartheid-imposed "homeland" structure. Inkatha resorted to widespread violence and repression to prevent ANC activity and intimidate potential

supporters. "But it is doubtful whether the ANC in the region would have won a majority" anyway, Mandela said, "given our weaknesses of organization, problems of divergence of approaches of leadership, and weak presence in the rural areas."

Without the elections for local governments scheduled for October 1995, Mandela said, "there cannot be full democracy, because many of the weaknesses in the implementation of our objectives [since the elections] arise from the absence of legitimate local government." Interim local governments, which will incorporate previously all-white city administrations and surrounding Black townships into a single

which is providing jobs, building social infrastructure such as housing and roads, extending electrification and availability of potable water and sanitation, and organizing to meet the health and educational needs of the population.

In determining the priorities and pace in implementing these measures "we need to avoid two extremes," Mandela said. "The one is to conclude that we are merely in political office — weak, tied hand and foot by some terrible agreements that we reached in negotiations. The other extreme is to create the impression that we are all-powerful, ready to realize each and every one of the programs we would like to im-

ANC president told conference delegates. "Yet these are neither luxuries nor requirements foreign to the ANC's own politics. Sheer logic tells us that our program cannot be carried out in a sustainable way without a rational utilization of the resources at our disposal."

'Visible change needed'

"Let us be honest and say that we would have been more satisfied if more people could concretely feel the impact of social change," Mandela told the conference. "Let us be sincere and admit that perhaps the planning and introduction of necessary legislation took longer than the situation demanded... Needless to say, visible change will need to be the prime feature of government operations next year."

Mandela reiterated the approach the ANC has advocated in the new government in order to marshal resources for the RDP. These include "eliminating wasteful expenditures" and "tightening the belts of public officials." The government is also assessing state-owned assets "to determine how they can be used more efficiently to facilitate reconstruction and development." In that regard, he said, "the question whether to expand state involvement or to privatize or sell some of the [state] assets and enterprises depends not on ideological imperatives, but on the balance of economic necessity." The government must also pursue "a clear industrial strategy to expand our economic base and provide jobs," Mandela said.

Turning to the challenges in building the ANC in the new circumstances since the April elections, Mandela said, "We do face a danger that many ruling parties have experienced: that the organization could turn into a mere conveyor belt of government decisions or, on the other hand, a force steeped in a resistance mode. Similarly, without a clear organizational strategy and cadre policy, we could end up attracting to our ranks merely those who seek careers in government."

Serious organizational problems developed in the ANC in recent months, Mandela told the delegates, as a result of many leaders turning attention to serving in Parliament and beginning the organization of government ministries, both on the national and regional levels. "Except for the highest echelons," he said, "we did not have a plan for the deployment of cadres. We were disorganized, and behaved in a manner that could have endangered the revolution."

Coming out of the conference, he said, delegates "carry on our shoulders the responsibility of not only meeting the expectations of our members, but also ensuring that the ANC emerges from here, reinforced to give leadership to the nation as a whole."

Building the ANC

The tasks confronting the ANC in advancing its political course were addressed in the conference report from ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa. The sudden new tasks of government administration, combined with the lack of clear campaigns decided and led by the ANC's leadership bodies, had left "many of our branches and regions in a poor state," he said.

Ramaphosa explained that membership had declined in numerous branches since earlier in the year, and that many had become less active. This assessment was confirmed by discussions that members of the *Militant's* reporting team had with many delegates.

"We have to address the issue of resuscitating some of our branches and building them anew" in order to "ensure that we consolidate our membership and build branches that are going to be engaged with real issues that affect our people at the grassroots level," Ramaphosa said. To much applause, he said that the members of Parliament (MPs) "should assist in terms of strengthening our structures. We should also develop a sense of accountability by our MPs so that our MPs don't only sit in Parliament but are seen to be doing real work among our people."

A document on the ANC's strategy and



Militant/Greg McCartan

Delegates discussed course to strengthen ANC branches and mobilize communities to carry out economic development programs and win local elections in October 1995.

municipality, are now in the process of being established. These bodies are comprised 50-50 of members selected by the previous administrations and those chosen by the ANC and other mass organizations.

The town councils elected next October will be the first elected government bodies in South Africa based entirely on majority rule. The ANC's goal is a democratically elected local government in every part of the country, including rural areas previously denied even a semblance of such representation.

To address the devastating social and economic legacy of apartheid, the ANC has advanced a Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), the centerpiece of

plement."

Since April the RDP has been adopted as policy by the Government of National Unity as a whole. "While we have achieved support across the board for the RDP," the ANC president said, "we have to contend with rear-guard resistance from the parties of apartheid and white privilege, from influential elements within the civil service," and from the police and armed forces.

"Our socioeconomic problems are compounded by the fact of the serious economic crisis, and that the funds to accelerate reconstruction and ensure economic growth are concentrated in a few white hands," Mandela said. South Africa's capitalist economy is dominated by five huge monopolies.

Within the state apparatus, Mandela said, "we have inherited a mess. The litany of corruption, self-enrichment, and lopsided skills base within departments is only now coming into the open, exposing the decay of an NP [National Party] edifice that presented itself as efficient, as well as the rampant pillaging of public funds in the last days of apartheid rule."

The solution to the "serious difficulties of governance and delivery" the new government faces, Mandela said, "lies in involving the people through all stages of the process and honestly explaining to them the difficulties we face and the reasons behind some unpopular decisions we may have to take. This is the best antidote to attempts by opportunists of all hues to gain popularity on the basis of radical-sounding but impractical propositions."

"From time to time, our reference to fiscal discipline, macroeconomic stability, and economic growth tends to irritate those justifiably impatient about change," the



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tactics drafted for the National Executive Committee by Thabo Mbeki was presented by him to delegates on the second day of the conference. It was distributed in booklet form to all delegates at the opening of the conference.

The outcome of the April elections, the document said, "marked a decisive but not complete transfer of political power. The democratic majority has won only some of the important elements of that political power necessary for the advance of the struggle toward the completion of the current phase of the democratic revolution."

Nonetheless, "the composition of the organs of state power on the level of management and decision-making echelons of the civil service administration," transport, the police, the prisons, and the judiciary remain overwhelmingly white, he said.

"The process of transformation of these state institutions — to make them representative of our society, and therefore non-racial and nonsexist in their composition, and to ensure that they serve the interests of the people as a whole — will not be an easy matter. But this is precisely what the democratic revolution has to achieve as one of its strategic objectives."

The document explains that the "most convincing illustration of the possibility and potential for the ANC to build and consolidate social consensus is the extent of support the RDP has received from all sectors of our society," including business. Among the key steps to build such a consensus, it says, are ending "our status as a net exporter of capital," ending "the monopoly domination of the economy which results in stifling competition, blocking the emergence of entrepreneurs and discouraging foreign direct investment," "renewing all sectors of the economy to ensure that they are internationally competitive;" and "opening the South Africa market to more dynamic trade and capital flows."

'Motor force of democratic revolution'

"It is obvious," Mbeki said, "that in the course of the struggle for the fundamental transformation of our country, different strata and class forces will pursue different interests. The question must therefore arise: How successful shall we be in fostering and maintaining a national consensus such as will be reflected in institutions that bring together the government, labor, and capital?"

In this regard, he said, the ANC "in its composition must reflect the main motor forces of the democratic transformation: these are spelled out [in the document] as the black working class, the black rural poor, significant sections of the black middle strata, and various sections among the white community. We must discuss whether this assessment is correct, and if it is, what it should mean with regard to the composition of our membership as well as the composition of our leading bodies."

Members of the commission that considered this document explained to a press briefing that they were proposing that no vote be taken on it, since there had only been time prior to the conference to study and discuss it on a regional level, not in local branches.

Conference delegates did approve an abbreviated resolution affirming that the "main content of this phase [of the democratic revolution] remains the all-round political, economic, and social emancipation of the historically oppressed majority of our country. . . . Owing to its strategic location and capacity, the main social motive force for transformation is the working class," the resolution said. "We reassert our historic bias to this class, and to the rural poor, while being a broad movement and home for all historically oppressed strata, all democratic forces, and many new potential forces."

The conference commissions, which met for most of December 19 and 20, gave delegates the opportunity to discuss various aspects of the three initial reports and formulate resolutions for consideration by the conference as a whole. These meetings were open to delegates only, ANC leaders

explained, to minimize barriers to a free exchange of views. Members of each commission met with the press afterward to report their decisions and proposals.

Commissions averaging 250-300 delegates met on the drafting of a new constitution for the country, a central task of the members of the new parliament; the emancipation of women, which was addressed in many reports and resolutions; on youth; and other matters. The commission on local government, attended by 700 delegates, focused on mounting an effective ANC campaign for the October 1995 elections.

Land and agriculture

The conference adopted a resolution from the commission on "land and agriculture," which said that the "state needs to play a central role in identifying and acquiring land which is strategically located to meet the pressing needs of the landless and homeless." The one substantive piece of legislation adopted so far by the new national parliament established a land claims court to decide on petitions filed by Blacks dispossessed of their land since 1913.

A resolution from the commission on international policy reaffirmed the ANC's "call for the lifting of the [U.S.] blockade against Cuba" and called on its structures "to support appropriate campaigns in this regard." Washington's embargo, the resolution said, "is wholly unjustified and tantamount to an act of war," as well as "a gross violation of the right of the Cuban people to choose their own social system."

Delegates also adopted a closing declaration. While the big-business press and editorial columns in South Africa were urging the conference to transform the ANC into simply an electoral party functioning in parliament and government ministries, delegates resolved that "the liberation of black people remains incomplete. We therefore reaffirm the character of the ANC as a broad-based national liberation movement."

Delegates elected a new National Executive Committee and six national officers. Mandela, Mbeki, and Ramaphosa were elected ANC president, deputy president, and secretary-general, respectively. Jacob Zuma was elected the national chairman, Arnold Stofile treasurer-general, and Cheryl Carolus deputy secretary-general. Carolus is the first woman elected as an officer of the ANC. All six serve as NEC members.

Sixty other NEC members were elected by conference delegates. A secret vote was held on 200 nominations put forward by ANC regional bodies. Those who received the most votes were Bantu Holomisa, deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism; Pallo Jordan, minister of posts and telecommunications; Peter Mokaba, former president of the ANC Youth League; Mac Maharaj, minister of transport; and Winnie Mandela, deputy minister of arts, culture, language, science, and



Militant/Greg Rosenberg

Conference participants check out socialist literature at the Pathfinder table

technology. All are members of Parliament.

The newly elected NEC includes 15 women, 8 whites, and some 12 members who are Indian or Coloured. Representatives chosen by the ANC Youth League, the ANC Women's League, and regional leaderships of the ANC also serve as NEC members.

A proposal known as the "Mandela initiative" was presented to the conference from the outgoing NEC on the election of the incoming leadership body. It would have established a commission charged with bringing in an initial slate of nominees to initiate discussion, further nominations, and vote by the delegates. The stated goal was to take a step forward in representation of whites, women, Indians and Coloureds, and younger leaders from the regions.

"If we wanted to, we could have easily steamrolled this proposal," Mandela told a press conference following the NEC election. Since only the regional executive committees had discussed the proposal prior to the conference, and few branches had had time to discuss it, the suggested change ran into opposition at the gathering and was set aside.

Degree of unity and norms of ANC

In his closing statement December 21, Mandela told delegates the gathering "has confounded the prophets of doom who predicted the leadership would be roasted by the delegates — by you — for neglecting the concerns of its constituency and concentrating on reconciliation." Instead, "delegates here during these last five days have showed an unprecedented degree of unity," he said. "Our delegates were concerned with the implementation of the RDP — bettering the lives of the people."

"What is of the biggest concern to us now are the [October 1995] local elections, which we must win at any cost," Mandela said. "It is on the level of local government that we come into physical contact with the problems of the people. It is at that level that delivery in terms of the RDP has to take place."

In order to build an effective organization that can carry out these tasks "at all levels of the organization — whether local, regional, or provincial, or national — we need new blood," he said. "One of the

problems that we have had is an almost instinctive resistance to fresh blood."

Mandela stressed the need for broader debate of the many new questions and challenges confronting the ANC. Differences of opinion "honestly held, and expressed in a disciplined manner within the structures of the organization, should be encouraged rather than discouraged," he said. "They are healthy. They lead to vigorous debate and to examination of problems from all angles. Unfortunately, some comrades do not always welcome opposition, and tend to sideline or even slander comrades who have independent views."

Mandela returned to the problem of financing the ANC, pointing out that expenditures have far outstripped income over the past year. "Any organization, if it is an organization, must be able to finance itself," he said. It is ironic "that we talk of the waste and inefficiency of the apartheid regime, when in fact there is no financial discipline in the African National Congress." He said ANC regional structures had become dependent on the national headquarters for funds, and urged regional leaders to organize ANC cadres to finance activities through their own fund-raising efforts.

Expressing confidence in the ANC leaders now serving in government positions on both a national and provincial level, Mandela also warned, "We must never forget the saying that 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'"

"It has happened before in many countries that a national liberation movement comes into power and the freedom fighters of yesterday become members of the government. Sometimes, without any idea of mischief, precisely because they are committed and hardworking, they concentrate so much on their portfolios that they forget about the people who put them in power. They become a class, a separate group unto themselves, who are not accountable to their membership."

"One of the ways of preventing this temptation," he said, "is for the members of the cabinet to go regularly to their areas. Go to the squatters or informal settlements. Enter those rooms and see how the people live. Talk to them. Explain to them on a regular basis what the government is doing."

Interest in literature high at ANC meeting

BY VANESSA KNAPTON

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa — Even before copies of Pathfinder Press titles and the *Militant* could be set up for display, conference participants swamped the table and began buying books. The table, staffed by members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists, was set up alongside a stall from Johannesburg's Phambili bookshop and a variety of others displaying African National Congress (ANC) T-shirts, buttons, books, and other wares.

In the first two hours all copies of the Pathfinder book *Nelson Mandela Speaks* and many books on the Cuban revolution were sold out. Books of speeches by Malcolm X, writings on women's liberation, and works by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin also sold quickly. By the end of the meeting, delegates bought 138 books and pamphlets, nearly 100 copies of the *Militant*, and three subscriptions.

Mine workers, steelworkers, farm workers, students, ANC staff, members of the

ANC Women's League and ministers of Parliament found books and pamphlets that could help them in their work. Many wanted to know how to order other Pathfinder titles. Others expressed appreciation that the socialist literature and Pathfinder books were available. They reported that such books were still hard to come by in South Africa.

One delegate bought an issue of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* that has the article on farm cooperatives in Cuba. He said he is working to set up farm cooperatives in his area, "but I do not want to use the Soviet model," he said, referring to the policy of forced collectivization carried out by Joseph Stalin and his heirs.

"We are told here by the media that capitalism is the way forward, that it has worked well in other countries, in particular the United States," said one delegate. "I want to get an idea of what capitalism is really like in the Third World and in the United States."

Delegates purchased 19 copies of *New*

International, many of them choosing two issues to build up their libraries. "I purchased a lot of these books in Zimbabwe," a youth from the Orange Free State recalled, "and donated them to our chapter of the ANC Youth League so we could have a library. Now I need to get some more so we can keep up our discussions."

Another young delegate asked about titles on the Cuban revolution. He too had read other Pathfinder books about Cuba and wanted more. "Cuba has played such an important role in supporting our struggle here in South Africa," he said.

Unionists and other workers were especially interested in the case of framed-up unionist and political activist Mark Curtis. Eight signed endorsement cards to support his fight for justice. Dozens of delegates had learned about Curtis's fight previously, and many signed up to follow the latest developments in the defense effort. Because of the history of repression by the apartheid regime, many identified with a fellow worker imprisoned for political activity.

'We must wage a battle against capitalism'

Speech by Fidel Castro to international conference in solidarity with Cuba

The following is the full text of the speech given Nov. 25, 1994, by Cuban president Fidel Castro at the closing session of the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba. The conference, held in the Karl Marx Theater in Havana, was attended by 3,000 delegates from around the world. We are reprinting, with minor corrections, the text that appeared in the December 7 issue of the Cuban weekly *Granma Internacional*. Subheadings and material in brackets is by the *Militant*.

Dear friends, and I say "dear friends" with great pleasure!

It is difficult to summarize or make a synthesis of the contents of these conference days, but I can make some comments.

Throughout the last few days we have heard the best sentiments and the best ideas of this century, expressed as a call to battle, you could say. We have discussed many aspects arising from humanity's concerns over many years. In one way or another, you have expressed values for which humanity has battled and fought throughout this century now drawing to a close.

Throughout this conference, you have discussed the issues central to the long-fought struggles for independence and against colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism; the fight by the world's peoples for equality, for justice, for their development, for their sovereignty, never so threatened as today; the fight for social justice, the fight against exploitation, the fight against poverty, the fight against ignorance, the fight against disease, the fight for all vulnerable and dispossessed peoples; the fight for dignity, the fight for respect for women; the fight for unity among all peoples and races; the fight for peace — all of these values and many more. Thus we could say that this has not just been a conference of solidarity with Cuba, and it fills us with pride that this solidarity has inspired such a discussion.

The best values of our time have been reflected at this meeting, and we have also seen the presence of many, though not all — for there are so many that they would never fit into 1,000 or 10,000 theaters such as this one — of the world's finest, most selfless and altruistic citizens, representatives of humanity's best. This meeting has been attended by persons with the highest human and moral sensibility.

I greatly admire humankind's capacity to give, to sacrifice, to show generosity, and each time we receive visitors to Cuba, I observe them, assess them and try to gauge how they are thinking and feeling. My admiration for so many human values never ceases.

Absent from this meeting are many, many people whom we know as friends, who have demonstrated their solidarity and who have been examples of sensitivity, solidarity, and human generosity. But those traits remain the indelible, unforgettable impression that we will take away with us from this conference.

How has this conference unfolded and developed? Everyone I have talked with has told me it has gone well; it has been unlike many of the other conferences we have had, where everyone who wanted to speak did so and the meetings became an interminable series of speeches, and although this meeting has witnessed many excellent, brilliant, profound, and cogent speeches, an event many days longer and dedicated to letting everyone speak would not have had the same quality.

Thus there have been speeches, statements from the floor, questions and answers; we have had the working commissions on various themes; those who did not speak here spoke there, and a miracle has been worked to allow contributions from hundreds of people, although it was impossible for everyone to speak.

I think that the people who did speak more or less expressed the sentiments of everyone present. For that reason, we have to congratulate the organizers and leaders of this event, since in spite of differences, we have not had a Tower of Babel situation, and despite language diversity — 109 countries are represented here, according to the information given out — we have understood each other perfectly well, because, although we have different languages and even different political opinions, we were unanimous in the noble idea of solidarity with the Cuban people.

What is the blockade?

The blockade has become the central issue of this event. Many people have talked on this subject; comrades have stated that there is nothing much to add about the blockade. But, essentially, what is the blockade? The blockade is not only the prohibition by the United States for any kind of commerce with our country, whether it is technology, machinery; whether it is something more, food; whether it is medicine. The blockade means that they cannot sell to Cuba even an aspirin to relieve a headache, or an anti-cancer drug that could save lives or alleviate the suffering of the terminally ill; nothing, absolutely nothing can be sold to Cuba!

The blockade is not only the prohibition of all credits and finance facilities. The blockade is not only the total closure of economic, commercial, and financial activities

by the United States, the world's richest nation, the most powerful nation of the world in economic and military terms. It is not only just 90 miles off our coasts, but a few inches away from us, in the occupied territory of the Guantánamo naval base. The most powerful imperialist nation is not only close to us, but within Cuba; and it is not only close to us with its ideas, its theories, its concepts, its philosophy, but it is also among us in that minority that unfortunately supports the concepts, philosophy, and ideas they have been disseminating for so many years throughout the world.

The United States does not trade with markets that trade with Cuba, but it does want to export ideas, and the worst ideas; it does not export foodstuffs to Cuba, it does



Cuban president Fidel Castro addresses 3,000 delegates November 25 at the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.

not export medicines, technology, or machinery to Cuba, but it does export incredible quantities of ideas. What is happening now is that before the ideas market was much wider, and it exported many ideas to the socialist bloc, to the former Soviet Union and other countries; these days the United States reserves its counterrevolutionary ideas for us, from a vast and powerful stock of enormous, infinite mass media programming. This trade is a one-way trade as we do not have that kind of mass media, those enormous communications systems which cost billions, tens of billions of dollars every year, which we are condemned to receive, not to exchange.

But the blockade is not only that; the blockade is an economic war waged against Cuba, an economic war; it is the tenacious, constant persecution of any Cuban economic deal made anywhere in the world. The United States actively operates, through its diplomatic channels, through its embassies, to put pressure on any country that wishes to trade with Cuba, or any business interest wishing to make commercial links with or invest in Cuba, to pressure and punish any boat transporting cargo to Cuba; it is a universal war, with an immense balance of power in its favor, against the economy of our country, going to the extreme of individual moves against persons or individuals who attempt to undertake any economic activity in relation to our country.

They euphemistically refer to it as an embargo; we call it a blockade, but it is not an embargo or a blockade; it's war! A war solely and exclusively waged against Cuba and against no other country in the world.

We have not only had to endure the blockade during the years of the revolution; we have also had to endure incessant hostility in the political sphere, from attempts to eliminate the revolution's leaders, through every known form of subversion and destabilization, to direct and perennial sabotage of our economy.

During the last 35 years, we have been the victims of every kind of sabotage. I am not just referring to piracy, mercenary invasion, dirty wars in the mountains and the plains, consistent and widespread destabilization attempts, but we have also been the victims of direct sabotage involving explosives and incendiary devices.

Our country has also been subject to chemical warfare, through the introduction of toxic elements, and biological warfare via the introduction of plant, animal, and human diseases. There are no weapons or resources that have not been used against our country and our revolution by U.S. authorities and governments.

But you don't have to take my word for it. From time to time documents appear, papers that have been declassified after 25 years, although there are others that are

kept for 50 or 100 years; some say they hold them back for 200 years, something for the grandchildren or the great-grandchildren or great-great-grandchildren of the current generation, who will one day learn about the barbarities which these "champions" of freedom, these "champions" of human rights have committed.

The war waged against the Cuban revolution has been total and absolute; and it is not an old war, it is still being maintained, and plans are being made and carried out to sabotage our economy and our strategic industries.

Currently, organizations closely linked to the U.S. government are preparing to attack the revolution's leaders — nobody should think that this is a thing of the past, it's going on right now. They are planning dirty wars, armed mercenary infiltrations to kill, sabotage, create insecurity, and to bring death to every part of our country. I am saying this in all seriousness, that such actions against Cuba are being planned by the United States. This amounts to something more, much more than an economic blockade.

All these policies come accompanied by an incessant defamation and slander campaign against our country, as a justification for their crimes. Now the fundamental emphasis is being put on the human rights banner; human rights are being quoted by those people who have committed and are committing all kinds of atrocities against our country.

As I recently stated to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with whom I conversed at length, the most brutal and cruel violation of the human rights of our people is being committed with the purpose of killing off 11 million Cubans or bringing them to their knees through hunger and disease!

U.S. hypocrisy on human rights

The United States talking about human rights! They began by exterminating their earliest indigenous or native population. Who could forget that period and that tradition of collecting the scalps of American Indians? They killed more American Indians than buffalo, and they even finished off the buffalo.

They expanded their country at the cost of other territories, they extended their country by grabbing land, thus dispossessing their neighbors, in one way or another, of millions of square kilometers of land. In terms of Mexico alone, they grabbed over half of its territory; they still occupy Puerto Rico; they have wanted to devour Cuba for over 150 years; they have intervened dozens of times in Latin American countries; they imposed a canal in Panama. This refers just to our hemisphere. I have not mentioned the wars in Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, and in many other places.

What a history! And what a paradox that they have just approved Proposition 187 — this was not 100 years ago, nor 100 days ago, but just a few weeks ago — to bar health care and education for undocumented children, for those families living in what was once Mexican territory.

What respect for human rights are shown by these concepts? What ideas, what concepts about human beings? It's inconceivable that a child could fall ill and not be treated, when \$300,000 million are spent on the military budget and on the most sophisticated weapons ever known.

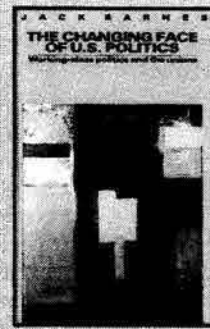
We don't have to look back in history. In contemporary times, since the start of the revolution, what has been the history of the foreign policy of the United States, that "champion" of freedom, that "champion" of human rights? A close alliance with the most repressive and bloody regimes in the world.

If we turn to Europe, we can recall that immediately after World War I the United States became the ally of

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Spanish fascism, which was supplied with weapons from [Adolph] Hitler and [Benito] Mussolini and which cost millions of lives.

We cannot overlook the U.S. alliance with South Viet Nam and its genocidal war against the Vietnamese people in the south and north of that country. We cannot overlook the Korean War, because Korea was completely demolished, reduced to dust. We cannot ignore Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the unnecessary use of nuclear weapons — a completely unnecessary use and which, in any event, could have been used against military installations but which fell on civilian populations of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. It rang in the era of atomic terror in the world.

We cannot forget the alliance with South Africa and apartheid. Neither can we forget that the apartheid regime built its own nuclear weapons, and when we were fighting in southern Angola against the apartheid army, alongside the Angolans, South Africa already had nuclear weapons, various nuclear weapons! The United States knew that South Africa had nuclear weapons and that those nuclear weapons could have been used against Cuban and Angolan soldiers. Ah! But this was the South Africa of racism and fascism.

The United States has created a great fuss and has even threatened war against North Korea, due to its assumption that the North Koreans were developing nuclear weaponry, but it tolerated, allowed, and indirectly facilitated South Africa's building of nuclear weapons.

But if we come closer to our continent, and to recent times, who could forget the dirty war in Nicaragua, orchestrated via armed mercenaries, which cost tens of thousands of lives and the mutilation of thousands and thousands of Nicaraguans? Who could forget that? The "champion" of freedom! The "champion" of human rights!

Dirty war in El Salvador

Who could forget the dirty war in El Salvador, the U.S. government support for a genocidal government to which it gave billions of dollars in sophisticated weapons to trample on the people's rebellion, a war that caused over 50,000 deaths?

And why did the Malvinas War happen? Simply because the United States had been using Argentina's 401st special forces battalion for its dirty war against Nicaragua and El Salvador, and it provided such exceptional service to the United States that the battalion felt it could occupy the Malvinas Islands.

This has nothing to do with Argentina's right to the Malvinas, which we have always defended. But the Argentine military felt that the moment had come to collect from the United States for services rendered in Central America, so that the former would back them in their military adventure. It was an adventure, in fact, because in the final analysis that is not the way to wage war. You either wage war or you don't. And if you wage war you take it to its ultimate consequences, if it's a just war. And they invaded the Malvinas Islands. But when the United States was put into the position of choosing between its allies and its British forebears, they chose and backed the British.

Who can forget what has happened in Guatemala since Arbenz's government in the '50s, when a popular government chosen by the people was trying to carry out agrarian reform to help *campesinos* and indigenous communities? Immediately the dirty war broke out and they were invaded by mercenaries. And what has happened since then? What has happened up until now? Over 100,000 people have disappeared. This is a country where for decades there were no political prisoners because everyone disappeared.

To this day, who supplies this government, who trains it, who prepares it? The "champion" of freedom, the "champion" of human rights.

And what happened in Chile with Salvador Allende's government, which had great popular support? They plotted against him, the economy was blocked in many ways and conditions were gradually created for a coup, which gave the country thousands and thousands of disappeared persons and murders.

And what happened in Argentina with that military government I mentioned? They say at least 15,000 disappeared. [Shouts of "30,000!"] I say "at least," because I don't want people to think I'm exaggerating and yet many say there were 30,000, and some people here are saying even more. But let's take my figures as the minimum. Are 15,000 disappeared really a small amount?

And who provided weapons to this government, who backed it, who gave it political support, who made use of their services in Central America? The "champions" of freedom, the "champions" of human rights!

And what happened in Uruguay? And what happened in Brazil? And who supported the coup leaders and those who tortured and killed people and made them disappear? Who invaded the Dominican Republic at the time of the Caamaño rebellion? Who invaded Grenada? Who invaded Panama? The "champions" of freedom and human rights!

Which of those governments was harassed? Which of the governments I named have been blockaded? Which of them have been denied credit and trade? Which was

denied the purchase of weapons and war matériel? Who didn't they train even in so-called anti-subversive action? Who didn't they train in the arts of crime, disappearances, and torture? And these are the ones who blockade Cuba, who slander Cuba, who accuse Cuba of human rights violations to justify their crimes against our people.

And I can say dispassionately, without being subjective, that Cuba is the country that has done the most for human beings.

What revolution was more noble? What revolution was more generous? What revolution showed most respect for people? And I'm not only talking about a victorious revolution in power, but since the time of our own war, of our own revolutionary struggle, which established inviolable principles, because what made us revolutionaries was rejection of injustice, the rejection of crime and the rejection of torture. During the 25 months that our intense war lasted, in which we captured thousands of prisoners, there was not one case of physical violence to obtain information, not even in the midst of the war, there was not one case of killing a prisoner. What we would do with prisoners is set them free — we would keep their weapons, which was all we were interested in, and we treated these arms suppliers with all the consideration they deserved.

At first they had been led to believe that we would kill them all, and in fact they would resist up to the bitter end. But when they discovered during the course of the war the true behavior of the Rebel Army, they would give up their weapons with less of a struggle when they were surrounded, when they knew they had lost. Some of those soldiers surrendered three times, because they were switched from one front to the other and they were used to surrendering, they had experience.

But the most important thing is that the Cuban revolution has maintained the principles of never resorting to torture, of never stooping to crime, without exception to this day, no matter what they say, no matter what they

“
They euphemistically refer to it as an embargo; we call it a blockade, but it is not an embargo or a blockade, it's a war! . . .
”

write. We know that a lot of this slander has been written by people in the CIA's pay.

Are there many other examples like it in history? In the world's history there have been many revolutions and in general they were rough, very rough: England's civil wars, the French revolution, the Russian revolution, the Spanish Civil War and the Mexican revolution. We know quite a bit about revolutions and many books have been written about them and about counterrevolutions. Well, one does not even speak of counterrevolutions. Revolutions tend to be generous and counterrevolutions are unfailingly merciless. Just ask the members of the Paris Commune.

In the case of Cuba there has not been one exception. In the whole history of the revolution, there has not been one single case of torture — and I mean that literally — not one political murder, not one disappearance. In our country we do not have the so-called death squads that sprout like mushrooms in this hemisphere's countries. [Audience names several countries.] You speak for us! We prefer not to mention names, but everything has happened in our hemisphere.

Why is there no mention made of the United States, where people have been brutally murdered for defending civil rights, men like Martin Luther King and many others, a country where as a rule only Blacks and Hispanics are given the death sentence?

Prostitution

Our country does not have the phenomena we see in others, such as children murdered on the streets allegedly to avoid the spectacle of begging and apparently to fight crime. The revolution eradicated begging, the revolution



Gold miners in Brazil. "Industrialized countries will try more than ever to exploit the natural resources and the cheap workforce of the Third World," Castro explained at the conference.

eliminated gambling, the revolution eliminated drugs, the revolution did away with prostitution.

Yes, unfortunately there can be some cases or tendencies that due to economic difficulties, and the opening to numerous outside contacts encourages some *jineteras* [prostitutes]. We do not deny this, and from time to time some may turn up on Fifth Avenue, but one should not confuse decent people with *jineteras*. Such cases exist but we fight against it. We do not tolerate prostitution; we do not legalize prostitution.

There may be some children, encouraged by their parents, who approach tourists and ask them for gum or something else; these are phenomena that we experience due to the special situation that we are living in, at a time of great economic difficulties as the blockade has been strengthened. But these things were not known during the normal times of the revolution.

You won't see people sleeping in doorways covered with newspapers, regardless of our present poverty. There is not a single human being abandoned or without social security, regardless of our present great poverty. The vices we see every day in capitalist societies do not exist in our country. This is an achievement of the revolution.

There is not one child without a school or a teacher, there is not one single citizen who does not receive medical care, starting before birth. Here we start medical care for our citizens when they are still in their mothers' wombs, right from the first weeks after conception.

We are the country in the world with the most doctors per capita, regardless of the special period, and I'm not only referring to the Third World, but to the whole world! More than the Scandinavians, more than the Canadians and all those who are at the top rankings in public health. By reducing infant mortality from 60 to 10 per 1,000 live births and with other pediatric programs, the revolution has saved the lives of more than 300,000 children.

We have the most teachers per capita in the world, regardless of the hardships we suffer; we have the most art teachers per capita in the world; we are the country with the most physical education and sports teachers per capita.

That is the country that is being blockaded, that is the country that they are trying to bring to its knees through hunger and disease.

Some demand that, in order for them to lift the blockade, we must surrender, we must renounce our political principles, we must renounce socialism and our democratic forms.

Furthermore, quite a confusing document was issued at the Rio conference, despite the noble efforts against it by countries like Brazil, Mexico, and others. It was supported by some countries that were very, very hand-in-glove with the United States, I don't want to mention any names. It is a document with a certain degree of confusion that leaves room for erroneous interpretations, and some interpret it as supporting the U.S. position of conditioning the blockade's suspension on Cuba making politi-

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Continued from the previous page
cal changes.

Political changes? Is there a country that has made more political changes than we have? What is a revolution, if it's not the most profound and extraordinary of political changes? We made this revolution over 35 years ago, and during those 35 years we have been carrying out political changes, not in search of a formal, alienating democracy that divides peoples and splits them up, but rather a democracy that really unites peoples and gives viability to what is most important and essential, which is public participation in fundamental issues. Furthermore, we recently made modifications to the Constitution, based on the principle that the people nominate and the people elect.

I'm not criticizing anybody, but nearly all over the world, including Africa, they are introducing Western political systems, together with neoliberalism and neocolonialism and all those other things. People who have never heard of Voltaire, Danton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, nor the philosophers of U.S. independence — and remember that [Simón] Bolívar in our own hemisphere was very much against the mechanical copying of the European and U.S. systems, which have brought catastrophe, division, subordination, and neocolonialism to our countries. We can see societies splitting into thousands of pieces, societies that should be united in their efforts to develop have ended up not only with a multiparty system but with hundreds and even thousands of parties.

We have worked, we've developed our own system, which we did not copy from anyone. We established the principle that those who nominate in the first instance are the residents. One may or may not agree, but it is as respectable as the Greek democracy that people talk so much about; and without slaves or serfs. Because Greek democracy consisted of just a few that would meet in the plaza, and they had to be few, because in those days they did not have microphones, and they would get together to have an election right there. Neither the slaves nor the serfs participated; nor do they today.

When you analyze the electoral results in the United States you discover that they have just elected a new Congress, where undoubtedly there are worrying tendencies toward conservatism and the extreme right; but those are internal matters in the United States. The truth of the matter is, I can assure you, I promise you, we have not made it a condition that the United States renounce its system in order to normalize relations. Just imagine if we told them that they had to have at least 80 percent of the electorate voting. Thirty-eight percent decided to vote and the rest said "I'm going to the beach," or "I'm going to the movies," or "I'm going home to rest." This is what happened to the "champions" of freedom, human rights, and civil rights.

It is very much the same in many countries of Latin America. Many people don't even vote. The slaves and the servants say: "What am I going to vote for, if I'm still going to be just the same?"

How difficult it is for us to come to an agreement! Because it's certain that the influence of the mass media is greater all the time and the series of obstacles that the popular forces have to overcome are increasingly difficult.



Students in Los Angeles protest anti-immigrant Proposition 187, which was adopted in the November elections in California. Castro condemned the U.S. government for pushing legislation "to bar health care and education for undocumented children, for those families living in what was once Mexican territory."

However, 95 percent of Cuban citizens vote in our elections and nobody forces them to vote. Even those who are not with the revolution go and vote, although they may turn in a blank ballot, so as not to vote for this one or for the other; or they vote for one or they vote for the other.

Right now, in our nation, I repeat once again, the local residents nominate the candidates, the people nominate the candidates and the people elect them. In this way, the possibilities of any citizen being elected are infinitely greater than in any other country.

One good example: I was talking with a Mexican delegation and they said to me: "The youngest of our deputies was here." "How old is he?" They told me: "Twenty-five years old." I was really astounded; but then I suddenly remembered that we have a number of deputies under the age of 20, because the students, from secondary school onwards, take part in the process of selecting candidates, as do all the mass organizations.

The *campesinos* take part in the process of selecting candidates; the women's organization takes part in the process of selecting candidates; the trade unions take part in the process of selecting candidates; the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution take part in the process of selecting candidates and there are numerous students who are deputies to the National Assembly and women, *campesinos*, workers and intellectuals, from all sectors. It isn't the party that puts up the candidates. The party does not put up the candidates nor does it elect them. It oversees the elections to make sure that all of the principles and the rules are observed; but it does not take part in any

of these electoral processes. That is the situation in our country.

In one of the most recent modifications made in the electoral process, a candidate has to win more than 50 percent of the valid votes to become a deputy.

[Ricardo] Alarcón was explaining some of these things, when he recalled, with a magazine that he had in his hand — he has the advantage of speaking English and he reads a U.S. magazine now and again — how one man had spent \$25 million in a campaign to become a member of the U.S. Congress. What kind of democracy is that? How many people have \$25 million to spend on a campaign? And in Cuba candidates don't even need to spend \$25, although any citizen might have to pay the bus fare to go and vote on the day of the elections.

What kind of democracy is that?

What kind of democracy is it that requires one to be a millionaire to be able to have all the resources with which to speak and persuade the people to vote for you, and then the candidate doesn't remember those who voted for him until the next elections four or five years later, he doesn't think about them ever again, he forgets them.

In our country people can be removed from their posts, and the same applies to a municipal delegate as well as the highest official. Anyone can be elected, but they can also be dismissed from those posts. That is our system, which we don't expect all the other countries to apply, it would be absurd to try to make it a model; but it is the system that we have adopted, nobody imposed it on us, no U.S. governor or supervisor came here to establish an electoral code as they did before.

We drew up the Constitution ourselves, we drew up the electoral code ourselves, we have planned the system ourselves and we have developed it ourselves, which is what you have been defending: the right of a country to establish the regulations, the economic, political, and social system that it considers to be appropriate. Anything else in the world is impossible, anything else is absurd, any other aim is insane and these lunatics go around trying to get everyone to do exactly the same as them, and we don't like their way of doing things.

That is why for us the question of ending the blockade in exchange for political concessions, concessions that correspond to the sovereignty of our country, is unacceptable. It is absolutely unacceptable, it is outrageous, it is exasperating and really, we would rather perish than give up our sovereignty.

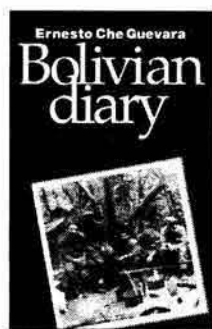
We have had the blockade for many years, however, it is necessary to think about one fact: there was one world when the revolution triumphed; today, 35 years later, there is another world. The world changed and didn't progress, it retrogressed, because the bipolar world wasn't to anyone's liking, but the unipolar world is much less to our liking.

When the revolution triumphed, there was a bipolar world. The United States imposed the blockade on us from almost the first moments. It began by doing away with the sugar markets, and it cut off our supply of fuel. Imagine the new revolution in those circumstances! Of course they cut off our supply of machinery, of spare parts, of everything, but there was the USSR and the socialist bloc.

That was lucky for us, because faced with the U.S. blockade, 90 miles away, there was another power in the world, another movement in the world which had a revolutionary origin, and which was at odds with U.S. imperialism. Thanks to that movement we could find markets for our sugar, supplies of oil, raw materials, food, many things. That was explained here.

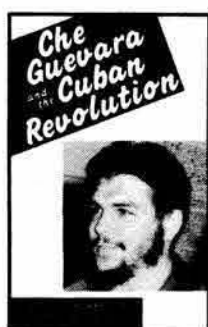
We were paid preferential prices; however, it is neces-

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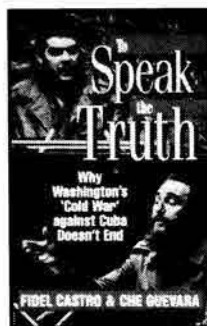
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sary to say that not only Cuba was paid preferential prices. The Lomé Convention established preferential prices for sugar and other products for many countries which were ex-colonies. In the United States itself, when it was a major sugar market, there were also preferential prices, before they snatched away our quota and redistributed it throughout Latin America and other parts of the world. As [Carlos] Lagé explained, 80 percent of the sugar in the world is traded through preferential prices. And very much in accordance with the principles of their political doctrine, the socialist countries paid us preferential prices.

That was the policy which we defended for all of the countries of the Third World, because it was the only way of reducing the great difference that existed between the developed countries and the underdeveloped countries. It was a demand of the world, it was a demand of all the countries of the Third World. And even so it was mutually advantageous, because although they paid us preferential prices, it cost more to produce sugar in the Soviet Union than the prices they paid us for sugar. But at any rate, we benefited from those preferential prices, and we used the money to purchase fuel, raw materials, and many things.

Collapse of Soviet bloc

In our situation it so happened that the USSR and the socialist bloc collapsed and the blockade got stronger. As long as the socialist bloc and the USSR existed we managed better, we could endure the difficulties. Our economy even grew under those conditions throughout nearly 30 years and attained an extraordinary social development.

However, it was in that world that the Cuban revolution was born. There was no other, there were no other alternatives, in the midst of the country being blockaded by the most powerful country in the world. That is why the disappearance of the socialist bloc and the USSR was such a terrible blow for us, given that the existing blockade was not only maintained but was also strengthened. For that reason our country lost 70 percent of our imports, and I wonder if any other country in the world would have been able to withstand a similar blow, and I wonder how many days they would have been able to withstand it — a week, two weeks, or a month. How would we have been able to if it hadn't been for the people's support for the revolution? How would we be able to withstand it, really, without our political system, without our democratic system, without the people's direct participation in all of the fundamental issues, which is true democracy?

Would any other Latin American country have been able to withstand the abrupt 70 percent drop in imports? Would any European country have been able to endure a similar trial? The politicians would have abandoned their principles and capitulated in an instant; but we have dignity, we have a sense of honor and we stick to our principles. For us these principles are worth more than life itself and we have never sold out our principles, never!

When we helped the Central American revolutionaries, the United States said that they would remove the blockade if we stopped helping them, and nothing of the kind ever crossed our minds. On other occasions they said that they would be prepared to remove the blockade if we stopped helping Angola and other African countries, and the idea of selling out our relations with other countries never crossed our minds. On other occasions, they said they would remove the blockade if we broke off our links with the Soviet Union, and it never occurred to us to do anything of the kind, because we are not a party or a political leadership that sells out its principles. The blockade will never end at that price, because it is a price that we are not prepared to pay.

“**The United States said they would remove the blockade if we stopped helping Angola, and the idea never crossed our minds...**”

That situation led us to the special period.

We had been working on some excellent programs before the socialist catastrophe, excellent programs in all fields; we were carrying out a process of rectification of errors and negative tendencies, of old errors and new errors, of old tendencies and new tendencies, and we were working very intensely when that debacle led us into what we could call a double blockade, because as soon as the breakup of the socialist bloc and the breakup of the USSR occurred and even before the breakup of the USSR, the United States was strongly pressuring those countries to stop trading with Cuba, and when the USSR finally disintegrated, the United States put on extreme pressure, and not without success, to cut off trade and economic relations between the countries of the old socialist bloc, the USSR and Cuba.

So our country found itself enveloped in a double blockade and, nevertheless, we had to save the nation, we had to save the revolution and we had to save socialism

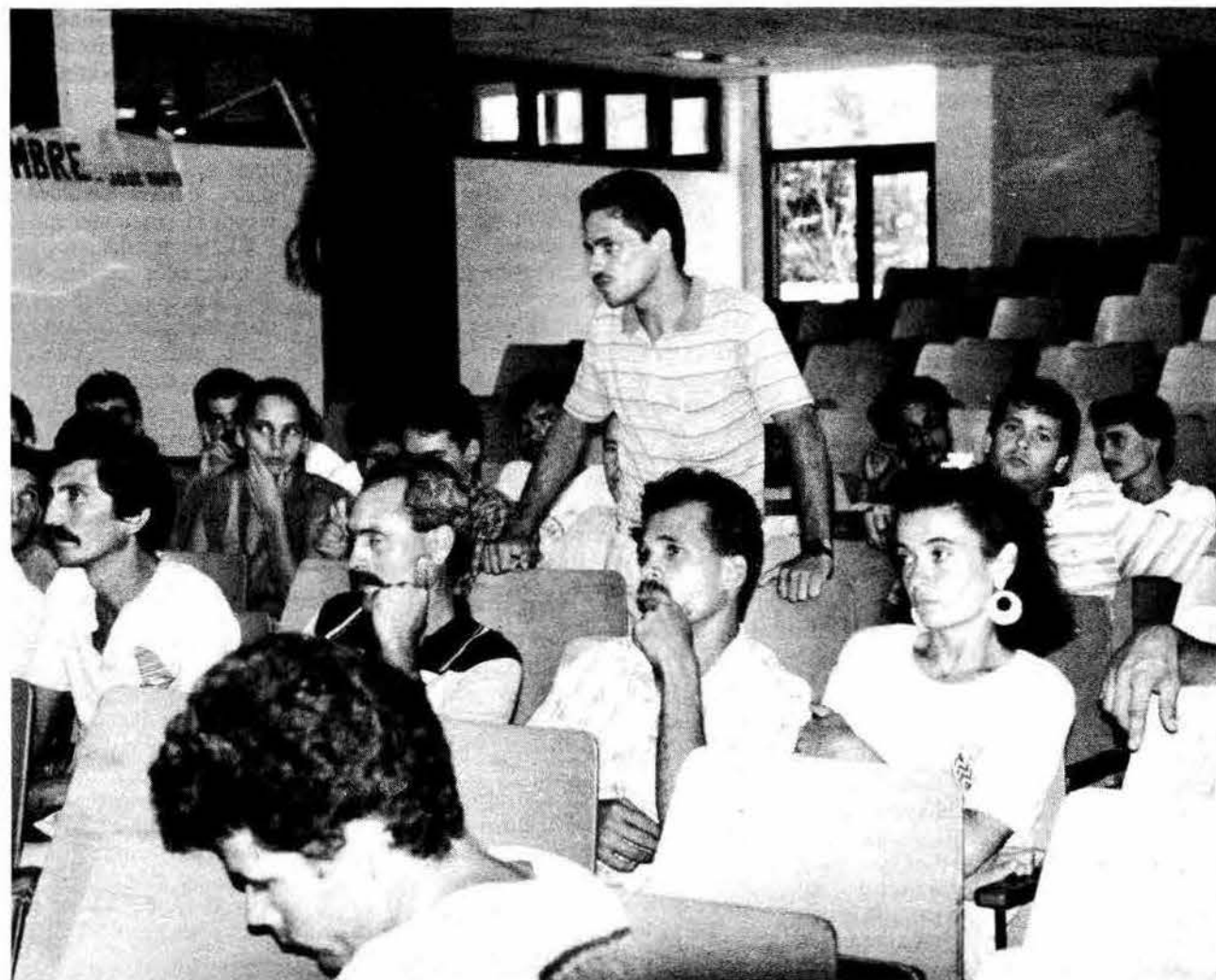
— we talk about saving the gains of socialism, because we can't say at this time that we are building socialism, but rather that we are defending what we have done, we are defending our achievements. This is a fundamental objective in a world that has changed in such a radical way, in which all the power of the United States has been turned against us; because, for example, they don't impose conditions on China, a huge country, an immense country, which defends the ideas of socialism; they don't impose conditions on Viet Nam, a marvellous and heroic country. Today there is no blockade against them, but there is a blockade against us. Put yourselves in the place of our party and our government. And in these such difficult conditions that have never existed before, we must save the nation, save the revolution and save the achievements of socialism.

What measures would it be necessary to take in this world which exists today and which, of course, won't always exist? Those are illusions held by those who believe that neoliberalism is already the *ne plus ultra*, that it is the be-all and end-all for capitalism; these are illusions that

was stated in this conference, of safeguarding our independence and the revolution, because the revolution is the source of everything, and the achievements of socialism, which is to say to preserve socialism or the right to continue constructing socialism when circumstances allow it.

We are making changes, but without giving up our independence and sovereignty we are making changes, but without giving up the real principle of a government of the people, by the people and for the people, that, translated into revolutionary language, is the government of the workers, by the workers and for the workers. It's not a government of the bourgeoisie, by the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeoisie; nor a government of the capitalists, by the capitalists and for the capitalists; nor a government of the transnationals, by the transnationals and for the transnationals; nor a government of the imperialists, by the imperialists and for the imperialists.

That is the big difference, whatever changes and reforms we carry out. If some day we renounced all this we would be renouncing the lifeblood of the revolution.



Militant/Laura Garza

September 1994 meeting of young sugar workers in Holguín province, Cuba, to discuss sugar harvest and elect delegates to national youth meeting on sugar production. Cuba is “a government of the workers, by the workers, and for the workers,” Castro said, “not a government of the capitalists, by the capitalists, and for the capitalists.”

they have. The world will teach us many lessons. What is going to happen with all of this would take a long time to explain, and would be much too long for us to bring up now, but for them it's never ending.

Now they talk about the globalization of the economy. We'll see what is left from this globalization for the countries of the Third World with the disappearance of all the current defense mechanisms of the Third World, which must compete with the technology and the immense development of the industrialized capitalist countries. Now the industrialized countries will try more than ever to exploit the natural resources and the cheap work force of the Third World, to accumulate more and more capital. However, it is superdeveloped capitalism, like in Europe, for example, that has more unemployed people all the time, and the more development, the more unemployed there are. What will happen with our countries? There will be a globalization of the differences, of the social injustice, the globalization of poverty.

However, this is the world we've got, with which we must trade and exchange our products, in which we have to survive. That is why we must adapt to that world and adopt those measures which we consider essential, with a very clear objective.

This is not to say that everything that we are doing is solely the result of the new situation. We have made changes as we go along, and even the idea of introducing foreign capital came up before the special period: we had realized that specific areas, specific fields could not be developed because there wasn't the capital or the technology to do so, because the socialist countries didn't have them. However, we have had to open up more, we have had to create what we could call a pretty large opening to foreign investment. That was explained here: in Cuba's circumstances today, without capital, without technology and without markets, we couldn't develop. Hence, all of the measures, changes and reforms that we have been making, in one way and another have the objective, as

We have shown solidarity with the world; it's not our task now to talk about this solidarity. As far as our solidarity is concerned, we should do the most and talk the least, because we're not going to make any apology for our conduct.

A few minutes ago, before starting the final part of this event, a comrade said: “Look at how many things Cuba has done. When visitors from one country or another talk; when they talk about doctors, students, people that were trained here, in one activity or another, it is clear that in these years our country has carried out many things.” For us, solidarity and internationalism are a matter of principle, and a sacred one at that.

Solidarity and internationalism

To provide an example, I'm going to give a few statistics. More than 15,000 Cuban doctors have given free services in dozens of countries in these years of the revolution, more than 15,000 doctors have fulfilled internationalist missions as doctors, more than 26,000 teachers and professors. I ask if any other small country, and even medium or big countries, has had this record.

Suffice it to say that at one point we had three times more doctors working for free in the Third World than did the World Health Organization, and we didn't have a lot of resources either; only minimum resources. We only had the honor of our health workers, with their internationalist calling. How many lives have they saved? And I wonder, is it fair to blockade a country that has done this? [Shouts of “No!”]

How many hundreds of thousands of children have we educated with our teachers in foreign countries? And we haven't only sent primary and secondary schoolteachers, but university professors; we have founded medical schools in diverse countries of the world. Is it fair to blockade a country that has done all this, and still does it to a certain degree?

Continued on the next page

Continued from the previous page

Half a million Cubans have completed internationalist missions of different types, half a million Cubans!

The Africans have been very generous, very noble, and have wanted to recall here Cuba's solidarity and aid in the war against colonialism, the war against foreign aggression, the war against apartheid and racism.

Like I said here, our soldiers were fighting in southern Angola, 40,000 men and women, 40,000 men and women! They were fighting alongside the Angolan troops, who acted and fought heroically. There were Cubans in southern Angola facing up to the South Africans after the battle of Cuito Cuanavale and when our counteroffensive was launched in southwest Angola, these men and women were exposed to the possibility of nuclear warfare. We knew it, and the distribution of forces in that offensive took into account the possibility that the enemy could use nuclear weapons.

At one point we had 25,000 foreign students in our universities. Cuba was the country with more scholarships per capita than anywhere else in the world, and we didn't brag about it; we just went on our way, fulfilling the task of education as [José] Martí taught us, and we did what we could for other countries.

I think that this extraordinary conference, your noble and generous words and words of solidarity reflect in part the history of our own revolution's solidarity. This has greatly encouraged us and gives us the strength to keep going.

There are a lot of choices in this day and age: the choice of freedom, the choice of sovereignty, the choice of independence, and the choice of social justice.

Social justice is acquiring such force as an idea — in the midst of neoliberalism, which is the negation of every principle of justice — that even some international agencies talk about it. The Inter-American Development Bank talks more and more about the need for social justice in this hemisphere. Even the World Bank is talking about social justice! They're the champions of neoliberalism and they talk about social justice, because they realize that the differences are so great and are still growing, and they would like to make the dream of neoliberalism come true, of capitalism with social justice. They're afraid that misery, hunger, and poverty will undermine the bases of the neoliberalism that they praise so much, and that is why they talk about social justice.

But we know that only the people can achieve social justice, and that neoliberalism and social justice are incompatible, they're irreconcilable; that a superdeveloped world next to an underdeveloped world is incompatible, irreconcilable. We know that the former will get richer and richer, while the latter will get poorer and poorer, and this is an irrefutable reality.

Your presence here shows that just ideas live on, that noble ideas live on, that values live on. And we have to multiply these ideas and values just like Jesus Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes.

The church talks about giving opportunities to the poor, and this seems excellent to us, but I think that today's world needs more than choices: it needs energetic, tenacious, and consistent struggle by the poor themselves. I should have said "churches" instead of "the church," considering that we're not only talking about the Catholic church.

We must wage an unending battle against the causes of poverty, an inexorable offensive against capitalism, against neoliberalism, against imperialism, until the day when we can no longer speak of billions of human beings who are hungry, who don't have schools, hospitals, a roof over their head, or even the most elemental means of living.

This planet is getting close to having 6 billion inhabitants; in one century the population has increased fourfold. The threats that humanity suffers today are multiple, not only social, but economic, political, and military.

Someone here was saying — I think it was Robertico [Robaina] — that nowadays they call wars "humanitarian missions" or



Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet with U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger in June 1976. Three years earlier, Washington backed a bloody coup that ousted President Salvador Allende. Castro described the White House's role in toppling elected governments and backing military dictatorships throughout Latin America.

"peace operations." Wars threaten us from all sides, interventions threaten us from all sides; but the world is also being threatened by destruction of the natural conditions for life, the destruction of the environment, a problem which is getting more and more attention and increasingly moves the conscience of humanity. We will have to make a huge effort in every sense of the word to save humanity from all these risks.

And what is the historical origin of this situation? Could anyone deny that it was colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism? Could anyone deny that it was capitalism? We are very conscious of all this, despite the setbacks suffered by the progressive movement, the revolutionary movement, and the socialist movement.

But we'll say it here and now, dear friends. We will never return to capitalism! Not to savage capitalism — or as Pérez Esquivel likes to call it, cannibal capitalism — or to moderate capitalism, if this exists, we don't want to go back, and we won't go back!

We know what our duties and obligations are. We've withstood almost five hard years already, when others thought the Cuban revolution would quickly disappear off the face of the earth.

We're working persistently and harder all the time, and even putting more and more emphasis on the subjective, on our own errors, our own deficiencies; emphasizing the subjective so that the objective doesn't become a pretext for deficiencies.

We've still got to raise the consciousness of our people. We still have to explain why we need to reduce the excess currency

in circulation and the methods used to continue gathering up the excess without using shock therapy; we have to look for efficiency in agriculture and industry.

I know that the issue about food production has been a worry of yours, expressed here. I must say that we are obliged to produce food without fertilizers, without pesticides, without weedkillers, often without fuel, resorting to animal traction, faced with the need to feed the 80 percent of the population living in urban zones. Cuba, unlike Viet Nam or China, has only 20 percent of the population in the countryside and 80 percent in the cities. They have the inverse, 75 percent to 80 percent in the countryside and 20 percent to 25 percent in the cities.

We even have a labor shortage in rural areas. Our agriculture and sugar industry had been mechanized, like many other sectors of the economy. Someone asked whether we should produce sugar or not. We don't have any other choice than to produce sugar, we have to produce it; now, it has become more expensive for the sugar mills and machines to produce less because of a lack of fertilizer and irrigation, for example. In general, we know how to produce food, but we've had to deal with a great scarcity of supplies for food production.

We've had to develop other areas. Tourism has already been mentioned here. It has become a necessity, although it wasn't promoted in the first years of the revolution, because it has its good side and its bad side. And since we can't live with the hope of being in an ivory tower, we

have to get mixed up with the problems of this world. And, based on the idea that virtue is born of the struggle against vice, just as magnificent flowers bloom from cow dung, we have to get used to living with all these types of problems. We have to look for resources in convertible currency to make these supplies available.

The livestock has been left without feed, without irrigated land, without fuel.

The problems we've had to deal with aren't easy, but we're handling it, accomplishing what Robertico said about sharing the little we have among many, rather than a lot among a few. We've been sharing what we have.

And then, under these incredibly difficult conditions — I repeat, there is not a single school without a teacher, not a child without a school, not a patient without a doctor or hospital; we maintain social security, we maintain our cultural development, the development of sports; we even came in fifth place in the Olympic Games in the midst of the special period. This gives you an idea of our strength in exceptionally difficult conditions.

Therefore, when we share the little we have among everyone, a lot of things can be done, and there are many countries in the world that have much more than we do and do very few things.

This event concludes, really, like an unforgettable lesson for all of us, and we hope for a lot, we hope for so much from this battle that you propose to fight shoulder to shoulder with us to end the blockade, to end the hostility against our country; to defend hope. Not because we have been predestined to be anyone's hope. We don't consider ourselves a people bound by destiny; we constitute a small people, a modest people, to whom history has in these particular circumstances assigned the role of what we're defending: our most sacred ideals, our most sacred rights. You all see this as hope.

We understand what it would mean for all the progressive forces, for all the revolutionary forces, for all lovers of peace and justice in the world if the United States succeeded in crushing the Cuban revolution, and because of this we consider defending the revolution along with you to be our most sacred duty, even at the cost of death.

Thank you, thank you very much, a million thank yous.

And let me exclaim one more time:

Socialism or death!

Homeland or death!

We shall win!

Long live solidarity! [Ovation]

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Want a space commander to fly coach? — Air Force Gen. Joseph Ashy requisitioned a 200-passenger transport jet to fly him, his cat, and an aide from Italy to



Harry Ring

Colorado at an estimated taxpayer cost of \$120,000. A stickler for regulations, the gen did pay the required \$85 fare for the cat.

A thought—"Not to alarm the Board of Supervisors, but the French Revolution started when

the government ran out of money. The working class, tired of being trampled by the ruling nobility, stormed the Bastille and set off the revolution."—Dana Parsons, Orange County columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*.

If they can remember who they are—A new "nanny-tax" law raises the threshold for taxes on household workers to \$1,000 a year, up from \$50 a quarter. Any overpayment refunds due on Social Security and Medicare withholding payments will be sent to the employer, who is then expected to reimburse the worker for his or her share paid.

She could cross her fingers—We're not clear on the religious/legal issue, but Yihya Avra-

ham died after spending 32 years in an Israeli jail for refusing to accept a rabbinical court's order to divorce his wife. (He took her in marriage at age 12.) Meanwhile, the chief rabbi said that because the couple remained legally wed, the widow was obligated to do the ritual seven days of mourning.

No kidding, Dick Tracy—The Rolls Royce company, which laid off half the workers at its Crewe, England, plant, is passing on a bit of the savings with a \$149,900 model, \$40,000 under last year's cheapest Rolls. Confided a company rep, "You know, even at \$149,900, this is not a cheap car."

Not to be hasty—The feds are reportedly "leaning" toward telling

Chrysler to recall 4 million minivans with rear door hatches that tend to pop open on impact. In 51 accidents where this happened, 74 passengers were thrown out, with 25 killed.

But not to be ignored—At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology annual "Ig Nobel," awards were conferred on those "whose achievements cannot or should not be reproduced."

Our favorite was the chemistry award to former Texas state senator Bob Glassgow, who sponsored a 1989 drug-control bill that would make it illegal to buy laboratory glassware without a permit. A Corning rep accepted the prize for him.

Proletarian gift—From Berg-

doff Goodman, a sweatshirt of pure cashmere, \$515.

And from another company, a cashmere watchcap, \$110. (If the recipient has an inside job, you might consider the lightweight version of the cap, \$95.)

Season's greeting—Our thanks to those whose contributions help keep this column going, and a reminder that clippings should be sent c/o Pathfinder Books, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006.

Or fax them to: (213) 380-1268.

And, to conclude—Best wishes for a revolutionary New Year and, on this 36th anniversary of its central role in the fight for socialism, a hearty viva Cuba!

Young Socialists meet Cuban volunteer workers

Continued from front page

are on a three-week speaking tour of Cuba, hosted by the Union of Young Communists. They have spoken at schools, factories, and other workplaces.

Bulldozers work ceaselessly shoving the rock into the water, building up the next section of the road from a depth of two-thirds of a mile. Unlike the more commonly used aqueduct roads, built with bridge supports holding an overhead road, the workers here undertook the monumental task of building a road by filling in—rock by rock—a path between the keys and the mainland.

With this method, workers have used easily available resources, considerably lowering the costs—an example of how Cubans are creatively seeking to meet the challenge of the current economic crisis. The road project includes 45 bridges along the way. Lourdes Legozburo Machado, an engineer, told Craine and Taylor they knew of no other similar road ever built on such a large scale.

Stopping for a moment Elier Manso, a bulldozer driver who has been working on the contingent for most of the five years, explained the work day is usually 14 hours. Many contingent members left other jobs to volunteer for this rigorous schedule to aid in Cuba's effort to draw more of the hard currency it needs to meet the population's needs. Several such contingents of volunteer workers are organized around Cuba, primarily in agriculture and construction, to meet some of the country's economic priorities.

"I work hard because this project is for the benefit of society," said Manso.

Workers capture armed terrorists

It was one of these workers that a band of right-wing terrorists from the United States ran into sometime after 3:00 a.m. on October 15, in an incident that made international headlines. About a dozen counter-revolutionaries landed on the coast here.

Contingent member Juan José Pérez Luna stopped a group of the terrorists in a car they had commandeered when they approached the area where he was doing voluntary guard duty. Announcing this was an "invasion," they pointed their guns at him.

Although outnumbered, Pérez Luna broke free and fired a round of shots at them before they sped away. When help from the town arrived, the terrorists were captured hours later, but not before killing an unarmed fisherman.

"We're free, we don't want these people," said Pérez Luna. "We may have some difficulties, but even with the difficulties we will keep on going. These rats lost their courage when they confronted someone who was poorly armed like me. We fight for principles, they fight for money."

One of the major difficulties Cubans face today is the battle to raise food production for the population. Everywhere Craine and Taylor went—a bicycle and household goods factory, a textile plant, a railroad tie plant—workers had volunteered to join the "Battle of Santa Clara" Contingent.

The contingent is named after the battle, led by revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, to take the city of Santa Clara in December 1958. Santa Clara is the capital

of Villa Clara province.

Beginning last October 2,500 people joined up for one or two years, leaving their jobs and cities to live in rural camps to grow food for Villa Clara province. Similar contingents have recently been launched in other provinces.

Craine and Taylor spent several hours talking with members of Column 8 of the contingent in Quemados de Güines municipality, who are growing bananas using microjet irrigation.

Asked why they would choose to leave jobs that were easier and do agricultural work Conrado García, 32, who normally works in a dairy plant said, "This is the most important need the country has right now, and we had to respond."

The base pay for contingent members is 225 pesos a month, higher than many factory workers, with a long workday; from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with a two-hour midday break.

Jorge Cabañas noted, "The brigade has a great political impact in this area, as well as in Santa Clara where we came from. We provide snacks for children in nearby schools, and guarantee a liter of milk to sick and elderly residents." Their main task, he said, "is to provide bananas for Santa Clara."

Some workers said they will return to their factories after their one or two years is up. But many others like Alexis del Santos, 27, who previously worked six years in a textile plant, said, "I will stay here as long as needed, three or four years, whatever." Other contingent members expressed the same spirit.

As happened everywhere the two touring socialists went, the workers plied them with questions. "What do they say about Cuba in the United States?" "What do you say as socialists when they charge Cuba is undemocratic?" "What is the sentiment against the blockade in the United States?" "What impact does the Cuban community in Miami have on policy toward Cuba?" "How much do you make on your job, how much do you pay for rent?"

"What does a doctor's visit cost?" was a common question, since Cuba's medical care is free. Many Cubans are aware of the astronomical cost of health care in capitalist countries.

'It's you Washington is afraid of'

Taylor and Craine presented a poster to the contingent of the Pathfinder Mural, a six-story high mural in New York depicting revolutionary fighters whose works are published by Pathfinder Press, along with some of the political books the young socialists campaign with in the United States.

"It's you the U.S. government is afraid of," said Craine. "It's because you offer proof that human beings can be motivated by a greater cause than just themselves. You are setting a dangerous example, of fighting for a world where basic needs are guaranteed for everyone, at a time when the government where we live is saying we have to accept a future with no guarantees of things like health care or education."

Craine added, "The U.S. government won't change its hostile attitude toward the Cuban revolution, but we are confident that more working people in the United States can be won to defend Cuba."

In every factory Craine and Taylor visited they saw evidence of the efforts workers are making to overcome the economic crisis, known as the special period, sparked by the abrupt end of aid and favorable terms of trade with the Soviet bloc.

At a textile plant, Craine and Taylor joined a party for outstanding workers and innovators, people who have saved hard currency by resolving problems like lack of spare parts by inventing solutions with things at hand.

Workers also explained what they had discussed in meetings being held at factories throughout the country called Economic Efficiency Assemblies.

"There are not enough spaces in the day-care center," said one worker. "The doctor was never in his office. He said he was studying for his specialty, but he has to be available," said another. At this plant of 2,500, there is a day-care center, a beauty shop, and a repair shop for household goods.

"We're not asking for better food, just that it be better prepared," a worker said. Like all factories, subsidized hot meals are served in the lunch room on all shifts. Workers said they were proud of their efforts to raise production, and that better conditions on the job are essential to do so. Students too are affected by the tight

economic situation. On visits to two universities in Villa Clara province Taylor and Craine asked about the cost of going to school.

Visit to universities

"Some articles in U.S. newspapers give the impression that Cuba is charging for education now," noted Craine.

"No," said Mani Flores at the Central University of Las Villas. "Education remains free, including books and room and board for those in dorms."

"What has changed is that students were additionally receiving a stipend from the government. Students who completed their military service got an additional stipend. This is what has ended, beginning this year with first-year students," he said. Students with special needs, however, can still apply to receive a loan.

"How much does it cost to go to school in the United States?" many students asked. Taylor responded, "Thousands of dollars just for tuition, and many working-class youth are shut out of getting a decent education because of that. That's one of the reasons Cuba remains an example."

"In spite of your difficult conditions, working people being in power means access to education is kept as a priority, unlike capitalist countries."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People

January 16, 1970

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Twenty-two young people who were present at a disturbance on the University of Texas campus [in Austin] have been charged with rioting and property damage according to the Southern Conference Educational Fund.

The incident occurred in the Chuck Wagon—a cafe in the student-subsidized Union Building. It has been a haven for activists from the community as well as the university.

Police were harassed there in early November, when they came in to take away an 11-year-old runaway. The police drew guns to silence the crowd; their car tires were slashed; four nonstudents were arrested; and the student-controlled Union board closed the Chuck Wagon to people not connected with the University.

On Nov. 11, a large group of students and nonstudents occupied the Chuck Wagon to protest the ruling. At 4:15, they were told they would be arrested if they did not leave.

Most people moved toward the exits, but before they could get out about 50 riot-equipped police moved in. They sprayed mace into the crowd. In the rush to leave, several windows were broken, tables were overturned, and crockery was broken. Eight people were arrested that day.

Three weeks later, the grand jury issued

sealed indictments for riot and destruction of property against 22 people. They gathered their information from police and by looking at photographs taken at the scene. Apparently they believe that anyone identified as being at the Chuck Wagon when the incident occurred is liable for prosecution under Texas riot laws.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

January 6, 1945

Puerto Rican workers, brought to the United States by promises of 63 cents an hour for an eight-hour day (magnificent in comparison to the miserable wages paid by American exploiters in Puerto Rico), are being fleeced of their wages and forced to live under intolerable conditions, according to their complaint lodged with the Puerto Rico Commerce and Industry Association in New York.

At least 3,000 workers are involved, according to the N.Y. Times report of December 28. They have been receiving only \$1.38 a day, the balance of the promised \$5.04 being deducted for food and clothing, medical care, transportation, withholding tax, and a 25 percent allotment for their dependents at home.

The workers testified that they were compelled to live in box cars, received poor food and inadequate cars, and that they resented being "treated like coolies." Their request to be returned to their homes has been brushed aside by an executive of the Baltimore & Ohio road, who said that the deductions "were in accordance with the contract," but made no comment about working conditions.

No to invasion of Chechnya

Moscow has launched a war against Chechnya, a republic of 1.2 million in the Caucasus region. The Yeltsin regime in Moscow aims to crush the resistance there and firmly reestablish its domination over the oil-rich region, which includes a major pipeline between the Caspian and Black seas.

The Chechen government is led by Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet general who seized power in Grozny in 1991 and declared independence from Russia. Moscow has never recognized Chechnya's independence. The war in Chechnya is one of several conflicts that have erupted in that region since the dissolution of the Soviet regime in 1991. Other wars have broken out in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. These explosive conflicts are the products of decades of Stalinist attempts to suppress the rights of non-Russian nationalities, combined with struggles between warring gangs of bureaucrats and would-be capitalists for power and resources.

The present crisis is another indication that Russia and other remnants of the former USSR are not heading toward a transition to stable democratic capitalism. So-called market reforms and limited foreign capitalist investments, while yielding overnight riches for some speculators, have not improved the living conditions of working people, which continue to plummet.

The Moscow regime is lashing out from this position of weakness and permanent instability. To preserve its rule, the regime currently led by Yeltsin will increasingly resort to military force. This Bonapartist tendency is reinforced as the bureaucracy encounters resistance from working people and becomes further fractured between rival factions.

The invasion of Chechnya by 40,000 Russian troops, facing resistance there as well as significant opposition in Russia itself, has sharpened divisions within the Moscow government. For now, at least, fascist politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is one of the few who fully back Yeltsin's military moves.

The Clinton administration, for its part, supports Yeltsin's crackdown on the Chechen people, despite increasing divergence between Washington and Moscow over foreign policy, such as the war in Bosnia. The majority of the U.S. rulers feel they have no better way to keep a lid on working people in Russia or control rebellious republics than to continue supporting his regime.

"Yeltsin is justified in using military force to suppress the rebellion," the editors of the *New York Times* stated recently. U.S. vice president Al Gore, on recent visit to Moscow, termed the invasion an "internal affair."

In rejecting the wars and brutality that capitalism generates, and that the bureaucratic regime in Russia grotesquely perpetuates, working people will find a way forward in the example set by the Russian revolution in 1917. Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, the workers and farmers government moved to restore to the people of the northern Caucasus the lands that had been stolen from them by the czarist rulers.

Working people around the world should speak out against the slaughter that Moscow is ready to inflict on the Chechen people. Mass actions like the 40-mile chain of 100,000 people in Chechnya held December 20 to protest the bombings show that the only force for progress is workers and farmers — in Chechnya, Russia, and internationally.

Toledo conference on labor party: no answers for working people

BY PETER THIERJUNG

TOLEDO, Ohio — If there was ever a need for a voice that uncompromisingly championed the interests of working people, it is now. The war in Bosnia, Washington's military interventions in Haiti and elsewhere, U.S. threats against Cuba, attacks on social benefits and the rights of immigrant workers, union busting — these are some of the life and death questions that demand a working-class response, particularly in today's context of a long-term world economic depression. Without a clear voice speaking in the interests of workers and farmers, ultrarightist scapegoating goes unanswered and

UNION TALK

gains a greater hearing, including among a layer of workers.

For those who may have been looking to the Labor Educational Conference, held here December 10-11, to discuss the need for a labor party in the United States to point a way forward it was not to be. The gathering had little to offer struggle-minded workers and youth.

The conference was sponsored by an organization called Labor Party Advocates and several locals of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW), among others. Organizers said 350 participants registered to attend.

Labor Party Advocates was founded a few years ago with the backing of OCAW officials to "educate on the need for a labor party in the United States" and "to debate how to restore a proper balance of power among the government, the corporations and the people."

OCAW president Robert Wages gave the keynote speech at the gathering. He told the more than 200 participants at the opening session that the Democratic Party had shifted to the right and had been "taken over by corporate lawyers parading as Democrats."

Rail union official Jed Dodd, general chairperson of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, described the "one-way class war" by the employers and their government against working people today. Since 1989, he said, the railroad workforce has been slashed from 600,000 to 200,000.

What most concerns Wages, Dodd, and other union officials is that the devastating decline in union membership and their inability to win even cosmetic concessions from the capitalist parties will threaten their social status, generous salaries, and perks. Given half a chance, they would prefer to collaborate with the employing class and its political representatives. "If the Democratic Party provided an atmosphere where unions could grow and advance, I could be a stalwart supporter," Dodd told participants.

These officials hope to find a way to realign capitalist politics and resurrect a "New Deal" electoral coalition of liberal capitalist politicians, the trade union officialdom, and civil rights leaders. Their threats to form a labor party are meant to pressure capitalist politicians in this direction.

The conference also attracted a variety of left-wing radicals, socialists, and political activists in the labor movement who accepted the procapitalist and "America first" political framework set by Wages and Dodd. Following the opening session, their participation in the organization of the conference and from the floor set much of the tone for the proceedings.

During workshops to discuss the fight for jobs, strike and lockout solidarity, women's rights, international policy, and other topics, a flurry of programmatic and action resolutions were put forward. But Jerry Gordon, an international representative of the United Food and Commercial Workers union who chaired the final session, reminded participants that the conference's purpose was educational and no binding votes would be allowed.

We shouldn't be surprised that militant-sounding union officials talking about a labor party are not interested in leading a fight against the employers and their political parties. None have distinguished themselves in leading a single fight to oppose the concessions demanded by the bosses.

It's no accident that the most important labor battles today — including the strike by United Auto Workers members at Caterpillar Inc., the rubber workers' walk-out at Bridgestone/Firestone, and the fight against the lockout at A.E. Staley Mfg. — were pushed to the periphery of the conference's deliberations and relegated to one of 10 scheduled workshops.

Real motion toward a labor party can only come out of working-class struggle. And struggle is what the future holds.

Strong unions are key to safety

Over the past several weeks the *Militant* has thrown a spotlight on the airline industry's sacrifice of safety for the sake of profit. With the December 13 crash of an American Eagle commuter plane in North Carolina, the death toll in U.S. airline crashes in 1994 rose to 257. It was the fifth fatal airplane crash this year.

The worst safety record in the airline industry since 1987 can be directly attributed to the companies' drive to cut costs and regain profitability. As cut-throat competition has made profits thin, the bosses have carried out an onslaught against airline workers' wages and working conditions. At the same time, the owners of the airlines have shed all types of safety procedures designed to prevent disasters in the skies.

Records show, for instance, that nine USAir flights left the gate without enough fuel in the past year and a half, after the company cut the number of pre-takeoff safety checks.

While there is ample proof that the airlines' profit drive and lax government inspections are the primary reason for the unnecessary loss of life, a weakened labor movement also contributes to the problem of safety. Unions that are not fighting for the rights of workers on the job are not in a strong position to be the guardians of safety for the millions who fly the skies every day.

Every major airline has gone after its workforce in the past several years, demanding concessions and implementing work-rule changes in order to remain competitive. In all but a few instances the officials who sit on top of the airline unions have managed to keep a lid on workers' desire to fight and helped advance the demands of the companies. The result has been staggering for work-

ers in the airline industry — lower wages, reduced benefits, job combinations, and ever deteriorating job conditions.

Having to accept these conditions without a fight breeds demoralization among union members. It corrodes the sense of responsibility workers have for doing their job right and making certain every precaution is taken. The companies are not going to voluntarily run safe airlines. Their drive for profits forces them to take all sorts of risks they deem "acceptable." It is up to the unions to safeguard safety.

As long as the unions identify with the employers and "our airline," rather than fighting against company attacks, the pressure on individual workers to cut corners and work less safely will mount. It will take workers standing up and forcing the companies to follow safe practices to turn this situation around.

Behind the airline safety regulations, the laws that stipulate how dangerous products are to be handled, and other safety measures are countless workers who have been injured or killed. Many of these regulations were implemented only after hard-fought battles by the labor movement.

More actions are needed like that taken by the pilots at American Eagle who refused to fly ATR turboprop planes in icy weather conditions. The company instructed two pilots to seek counseling and suspended a third, but their actions contributed substantially to forcing American to take the unsafe planes out of commission. The labor movement should champion every refusal to operate unsafe equipment, and not give an inch to the employers' pleas to let safety take a back seat to profitability.

Read, sell Marxist magazine

Continued from front page

ultimately will decide whether the capitalists and their armies and thugs will drag humanity to fascism and war or will be stopped in their tracks by a rising working-class movement that wrests power from them and begins to build a socialist society around the world.

This is why the *Militant* urges its readers to study and discuss the brand-new issue of *New International* and to be part of an ambitious campaign, beginning now, to sell at least 1,500 copies of magazine. As part of this 10-week campaign to make this important tool available to fighting workers and youth around the world, volunteers are already translating its contents into Spanish, French, and Swedish. The new issues of *Nueva Internacional*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and *Ny International* will be off the presses by March.

Today, workers and a new generation of youth are beginning to live through the effects of the worldwide depression and the increasing instability, unemployment, budding fascist currents, and war it engenders. These developments were explained in a 1988 document entitled "What the 1987 stock market crash foretold," which is contained in the new issue of the Marxist magazine. Increasing numbers already feel the chilly winds of an ap-

proaching capitalist catastrophe. Under these conditions, workers and others who enter into defensive struggles against the employers' attacks can be won to a socialist course — if they can learn from and apply the historic conquests of the communist movement.

The fact that readers of the *Militant* successfully campaigned to get out the book *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's Cold War against Cuba Doesn't End*, selling 600 copies, is evidence of the hunger for this kind of political literature among workers, farmers, and youth.

We urge every reader to join with others in your area to take goals for sales of *New International* no. 10. Those who want to join discussions on the articles in the magazine can call distributors of the magazine listed on page 12.

New International is above all a tool. Like other tools, it is only useful in the hands of workers and others who are trying to get a job done. It may not be necessary to become a communist to be an effective union activist, to fight against the U.S. embargo against Cuba, or to defend abortion rights. But being a communist is necessary for those who want to change the world. For those who have that goal, the material in *New International* is an invaluable guide to political action.

Janitors meet to launch union drive in California

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important

voted December 15 to retain the International Association of Machinists (IAM). The machinists' union received 6,482 votes compared to 5,923 for the craft-minded Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA). The election was called following passage of an almost six-year contract containing deep concessions in the

ON THE PICKET LINE

struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Nearly 2,000 janitors from Service Employees International Union Local 399 held a special convention in Pasadena, California, December 10 to launch organizing efforts and a fight to renew their contract, which expires April 1. After years of marches, protests, and organizing efforts, the number of unionized janitors in the Los Angeles metropolitan area has increased from 1,500 in 1987 to more than 8,000 today.

Mobilized through the Justice for Janitors campaign, the workers have spread their organizing efforts to Pasadena, the Los Angeles airport, and Long Beach, winning health insurance and improved wages. Janitors in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valley areas earn \$8,000 a year less than unionized Los Angeles workers. Their average wage is \$4.25 an hour with no benefits or vacation.

Delegates at the convention approved resolutions demanding wage increases for all, health insurance, no speedup, organizing the unorganized, and "one county, one contract."

During the convention, participants marched to Pasadena City Hall to protest recent union-busting moves by Liberty Management and Dean Whitter Realty, who kicked out union janitors and replaced them with nonunion workers, paying them lower wages and no benefits. Community activists, students, and small delegations of rank-and-file workers from several unions attended the convention and pledged their support to the janitors' campaign.

Workers at United vote to retain Machinists union

Mechanics, cleaners, and other eligible workers at United Airlines

form of an Employee Stock ownership Plan, which was backed by IAM officials. AMFA sought to create a separate organization for mechanics by splitting them off from baggage handlers and other IAM-represented workers at United, who they claim drag down the wages of skilled workers.

Nurse's aides in Iceland strike for higher wages

Some 750 nurse's aides in state-run hospitals, nursing homes, and polyclinics across Iceland have been on strike since November 10. They are demanding wage increases of 5,500 kronur, a uniform contract for all nurse's aides regardless of where they live in the country, and further educational opportunities. They are also opposing the growing inequalities among employees in the health-care system and demanding greater equality in income.

The nurse's aides have been negotiating since March 1993. Several trade unions have declared their support and donated funds, including the country's biggest union Dagsbrun (Dawn), made up of 8,000 workers in the capital area of Reykjavik. Just under half of the nurse's aides in Iceland belong to the Nurse's Aides National Union.

Court limits pickets at B.C. construction site

A two-week closure of the Macmillan Bloedel construction site in Port Alberni, British Columbia, ended December 7 when members of the company-organized Canadian Iron, Steel and Industrial Workers Union resumed work. Some 300 members of the British Columbia and Yukon Building Trades Council and other local unions were forced to step aside and allow clear passage onto the site as ordered by a court injunction read out by Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The three-



Militant/Bill Estrada

Justice for Janitors convention in Pasadena, California, December 10. Years of protests, marches, and organizing drives increased number of unionized janitors in Los Angeles from 1,500 in 1987 to more than 8,000 today. Their demand is "one county, one contract."

month-long dispute began when the company changed its 45-year policy of awarding contracts only to union contractors.

The new court injunction restricts union presence to 15 people at the union camp beside the designated construction site entrance, forbids union members from approaching or talking to TNL workers as they enter or leave the site, and permanently bans picketing at this gate. A total of 35 union members were arrested for defying the injunction by blocking the gate December 7 and 8. This brings to 100, the number arrested during this dispute.

Meatpackers support Caterpillar strikers

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 23 at North Side Packing in Arnold, Pennsylvania, have been discussing how they can support workers on strike against Caterpillar or locked out by A.E. Staley in Decatur, Illinois. A meatpacker who participated in an October 15 union rally in Decatur brought back T-shirts that were raffled off in the plant. Twenty-nine packing-house workers bought tickets, contributing \$76. Two workers followed up with a letter to local union officials requesting that the local make a further financial contribution and ask the strikers to organize a speaking tour to Pennsyl-

vania. As a result the Executive Board of Local 23 approved a \$200 contribution and sent a letter of solidarity to the strikers.

CP-Soo rail workers approve union contract

United Transportation Union (UTU) members on the Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line Railroad voted 654-174 to accept a contract recommended by top UTU officials. Some 75 percent of the union's 1,100 members cast ballots.

The contract was signed December 5, concluding a nearly seven-year period during which UTU members on the ninth largest U.S. railroad had worked under an expired contract without a wage increase. This situation prompted a 47-day walkout last summer, which ended when President Bill Clinton ordered strikers back to work and convened a Presidential Emergency Board to make recommendations on a contract.

The agreement allows the rail giant to slash current two-member crews to a conductor only on all jobs, and to exempt selected jobs from any existing work rules for up to six months. It creates an incoming third tier of new employees who are ineligible for \$17 a day in "short crew pay," even when trained as a conductor. A two-tier signing bonus increases divisions between newer and more

senior workers.

The railroad dangled a termination buyout of up to \$105,000 for senior workers who may be entitled to it. The contract also earmarks a maximum of about \$6,000 in retroactive lump sum payments for eligible union members.

Workers at Northwest Airlines stage job action

In response to more than a year of cuts in crew sizes, flight attendants at Northwest Airlines are waging a "work to contract" campaign. Many workers are refusing overtime and will strictly adhere to other contract rules. At the same time the airline has cut crew size, it has offered unpaid leaves until 1995 for flight attendants, meaning even fewer workers during the holiday travel rush.

The following individuals contributed to this article: Mark Friedman, member of IAM Local 2785 in Los Angeles; Janice Lynn, member of IAM Local 1759 in Washington, D.C.; Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdottir from Reykjavik, Iceland; Dan Grant, member of United Steelworkers of America Local 3910, and Bonita Murdock from Vancouver, British Columbia; Gerardo Sanchez, member of UFCW Local 23 in Arnold, Pennsylvania; and Jon Hillson, member of UTU Local 1882 and Kip Hedges from Minneapolis.

Socialist garment, textile workers discuss labor resistance

BY L. PALTRINERI

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — "One of the most effective responses by working-class fighters to the government's attacks on our rights and standard of living was the 70,000-strong march for immigrant rights in Los Angeles October 16," Francisco Picado told a meeting of socialist garment and textile workers here recently. An important component of the march, organized and led by immigrant workers, was a contingent of garment workers in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). The protest, initiated by non-union garment workers, was "reminiscent of how the ILGWU itself was born, through mass actions and strikes, and shows the potential power of the working class," Picado noted.

Gale Shangold, an ILGWU member from Los Angeles, reported that many of her coworkers went to the march. But, she noted, there is still a big debate among working people in Los Angeles — including Chicanos and other Spanish-speaking workers — around Proposition 187. Many workers of all nationalities supported the anti-immigrant bill, which was approved by a substantial majority in November.

Participants in the two-day meeting were members of the Socialist Workers Party who work in mills and factories organized by the ILGWU or the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). They discussed how the capitalist economic and social crisis impacts on garment and textile workers and took special note of a series of recent organizing drives in the industry. As a result of these drives, more than 7,000 workers in the southern United States have joined ACTWU in the last year and a half.

Strike strengthens Kmart workers

Warehouse workers at the Kmart distribution center here who won union recognition a year ago recently waged a one-week strike. Kmart has been dragging its feet on a contract while harassing and firing workers for supporting the union.

M.J. Rahn, an ACTWU member who participated in the walkout, reported that ACTWU Local 2603 had been strengthened through the strike action. The shipping of freight was crippled by the pickets. When we decided to return to work after a week on the picket line, "we drove caravan-style through the gates with horns blowing, then

marched into the cafeteria, letting everyone we saw know that ACTWU is back and will continue the fight inside the plant," Rahn said.

Another important strike is being waged by two ACTWU locals at Delila's Manufacturing in Louisville, Georgia, and its sister plant, Samson's, in nearby Waynesboro. Some 500 workers are now in their sixth week on strike, in an effort to win their second contract.

These strikes are especially important for workers in the South, where historically a higher percentage of workers are nonunionized than in the north. Often, even after winning union recognition elections, the employers have succeeded in dragging out contract negotiations for months or even years.

"Defending the socialist revolution in Cuba and the fight of working people in the United States to defend our wages and standard of living against the employers' attacks are part of the same fight," Picado said. The socialist workers have made building the January international brigade of young people to Cuba one of their main campaigns.

Karen Ray, an ACTWU member who works at Malden Mills in Massachusetts, reported that one of her coworkers is very in-

terested in joining the brigade. They are working together to raise the hundreds of dollars and the time off work that will make the trip possible.

Wendy Lyons, an ACTWU member from Philadelphia, reported on the projected merger of the ILGWU and ACTWU, currently scheduled for June 1995, following the conventions of the two unions. This was one of the reasons why socialist workers who were members of the two unions were meeting together, she said.

Similar meetings of socialist steelworkers, coal miners, meatpackers, auto workers, oil and chemical workers, machinists, and rail workers also met during the last several weeks.

The meatpacking and the garment and textile meetings were among the smallest of the socialist workers' gatherings. Lyons reported that members of the Socialist Workers Party from around the country, many of whom are currently members of other unions, had volunteered to move to Greensboro, Atlanta, New York, and other cities to find jobs in the garment and textile industries. A similar project is under way to increase the number of socialist workers in meatpacking.

Ottawa rulers debate Bosnia war

Capture of troops sparks crisis on role of Canadian military

BY ROBERT SIMMS
AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — The release of 55 Canadian soldiers who had been held hostage in the former Yugoslavia by right-wing Bosnian Serb forces has been accompanied by a flag-waving and anti-U.S. campaign by capitalist politicians and the media. At the same time, the involvement of Canadian forces in the war in Bosnia is creating a crisis for the rulers of this country over their military role in the world.

The soldiers, freed December 8 after two weeks of detention, were part of the 2,000 soldiers the Canadian government has sent to the region. Eight hundred remain in Bosnia while another 1,200 are stationed in Croatia.

Speaking to the House of Commons December 8, Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said Canadians should be proud of the 55 "peacekeepers who acted with calm, courage and stood there because they know they are involved in an extremely important mission, to try to help the poor civilians who are trapped in this terrible situation."

The previous week, when he was in Paris before attending the December 5-6 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Budapest, Hungary, Chrétien told *Le Monde* that "the Americans want to control everything and fight down to the last Canadian and Frenchman." Ottawa has raised objections to Washington's proposal to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia and carry out more NATO bombing raids against Serb positions.

Since the end of World War II, Ottawa has used its limited but sophisticated military resources, under the cover of the



Canadian troops move armored personnel carrier into position at Sarajevo airport in Bosnia. The Canadian military's false image as "peacekeeper" has taken a beating.

United Nations, as a lever to advance the economic and political interests of the Canadian capitalist class in the world. For this reason Ottawa has supplied troops and military hardware for more than 30 UN-sanctioned military interventions since 1947. Out of a total military force of 72,000, Ottawa maintains almost 4,000 troops abroad in UN operations in Rwanda, Haiti, Middle Eastern countries,

and Cambodia, as well as the former Yugoslavia.

Recently the false image of the Canadian military's role as a world "peacekeeper" has taken a beating. The debate has been sharpened by continued revelations about Ottawa's cover-up of the murder and torture of Somali civilians by Canadian troops during the UN military operation in that country.

Despite the hype, Canadian soldiers protect the economic and political interests of Canada's ruling billionaire families, both at home and abroad. The Canadian army has been used on numerous occasions in Canada against the struggles of both the Quebecois and Native people to end national oppression and for their right to self-determination.

Internationally, Ottawa's "peacekeeping" forces aided in the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their land and the setting up of the Israeli Zionist state in 1948. They participated in the UN operation in the early 1960s that ended in the murder of revolutionary leader Patrice Lumumba and the overthrow of his government in what is now Zaire.

Today, the UN-sponsored U.S. occupation of Haiti includes the use of Canadian police and military personnel who are training the cops who were part of the previous military dictatorship.

At the end of September, Minister of Foreign Affairs André Ouellette proposed that a "standing army" be organized to intervene rapidly in international "hotspots" under the UN banner. In a December 1 review of Canadian military policy, Defense Minister David Collette proposed that more of Canada's \$12 billion military budget be used for UN operations. However, because Washington is Ottawa's biggest trading partner it has no choice but to rely on U.S.-led war alliances like NATO in Europe and the North American Aerospace Defense Command. Collette proposed no changes in Canada's membership in these organizations.

As the imperialist crisis deepens over the situation in Bosnia, the Liberal government as well as the Bloc Québécois, the official parliamentary opposition, remain in favor of maintaining Canadian troops in Bosnia and Croatia. The right-wing Reform Party has called for their withdrawal on the grounds that the UN military mission is not clear and the danger to Canadian soldiers too great.

Crisis over 'peacekeeping' role

However, doubts are being raised over whether it is possible for the Canadian government to continue to center its military policy on UN "peacekeeping" operations.

Columnist Jeffrey Simpson, writing in the *Globe and Mail*, complained that "the UN's will has been continually defied....Canada's blue helmets were sent by a government that was not even part of the 'contact group' dealing directly with the protagonists in the former Yugoslavia."

An editorial in the November 30 *Globe and Mail* questioning the effectiveness of UN military operations points out, "There is no New World Order; there is the Familiar World Order...a messy combination of national sovereignty, self-interest, international law and public opinion. The behavior of states is governed to some degree by the United Nations charter, but those guidelines are enforceable only on a case-by-case basis through agreement of the major powers."

At its biennial convention last May, the Canadian Labour Congress reaffirmed the union officialdom's support for the use of Canadian troops in the former Yugoslavia under the UN flag. This position favors the employers and is not in the interests of working people in Canada or anywhere else.

Fighting workers need to demand that Ottawa and the other imperialist powers remove their troops from the former Yugoslavia. Such a move can give workers and farmers in that region greater political space to fight to end the war themselves.

Susan Berman is a member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 1285.

John Steele is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113.

Explosion kills miner in Yellowknife, Canada

BY SUSAN BERMAN

TORONTO — Gold miner Brian Bodnariuk was killed December 12 in an explosion at Miramar's Nerco Con mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Many of the miners at Miramar actively supported workers at Royal Oak's Giant Mine in the same town during a 1992-93 strike there.

In initial news reports, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) suggested the explosion was the result of foul play or suicide. By late afternoon, they had backed away from this story, and are now investigating the blast.

These initial police allegations were of concern to unionists in Yellowknife because of ongoing attempts by employers and the RCMP to frame up Royal Oak miner Roger Warren, who is on trial on false charges of murder in relation to an explosion at the mine where he worked. The two incidents are unrelated.

According to Kathy MacPhee, the wife of a Con miner who was active in the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied

Workers (CASAW) strike against Royal Oak, Bodnariuk, 33, was about to leave the mine with his coworkers at the end of day shift when he realized he had forgotten something. He jumped on a Lokey (a car used to pull ore cars) to go back to his work area to get what he had forgotten. A short time later, the other miners heard the blast. They ran back and found Bodnariuk's remains.

RCMP grills miners

The RCMP grilled miners on the scene as if this were a murder investigation. One miner, according to MacPhee, was interrogated for six hours. After the interrogation, the cops provided no medical crisis team and he was left wandering Yellowknife in shock.

Wasting no time, Miramar reopened the mine the next day for afternoon shift. Meanwhile, the investigation will continue. Some of the same RCMP agents on this inquiry were involved in the investigation of the blast at the Giant Mine.

The threat to life and limb in the mines

becomes a bigger question as mine bosses push harder for production. This was one of the issues in the Giant Mine strike. Workers there were demanding increased hours for mine safety inspection each month.

The companies are trying to weaken safety provisions that cut down on production time. One of the frequent illegal work practices at the Giant Mine is transporting miners and explosives in the same man-car.

Some miners believe this was the cause of the blast during the strike by CASAW members that led to the death of nine replacement workers. The bosses are alleging a bomb explosion and are falsely accusing unionist Warren.

The employers use a bonus system in the mine to pressure workers to cut corners on safety and increase production. Each miner's wage is determined by how many rounds he sets in the course of a shift. This setup encourages some miners to work through lunch breaks, use temporary unsafe storage areas for explosives, or turn a blind eye to unsafe company practices.

Conditions at the Giant Mine are known to be even worse than at Miramar. From January to April 1992, right before the CASAW strike, there were 81 reported accidents in the mine. Conditions deteriorated as mine owner Peggy Witte drove the cost of production down from \$438 per ounce of gold in 1990 to \$277 per ounce today. Production is also up 13 percent. Many miners report that conditions underground are worsening.

The trial of Warren has been recessed until January. In late December several miners testified they had seen Warren during the course of the night before the blast, corroborating the fact that he was not at the scene of the explosion.

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